

Year 2025-2026

	Drama					
	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
	Half Term 1	Half Term 2	Half Term 1	Half Term 2	Half Term 1	Half Term 2
Scheme of Work	Commedia Dell'Arte	Murder mystery	Romeo and Juliet	Frantic Assembly	Devising - Stimuli	Soap Operas
Knowledge and Skills (key threshold concepts)	Understanding the origins and development of Melodrama and Commedia Dell'Arte. Exploration of the cultural and social contexts in which these styles flourish. Recognising and employing stock characters typical of Melodrama and Commedia Dell'Arte. Identifying and utilising exaggerated gestures and vocal expressions. Mastery of physical comedy, slapstick and improvisation. Developing the skills to use masks effectively (particularly in Commedia). Incorporating melodramatic techniques such as heightened emotion and clear moral contrasts. Skills explored include Characterisation, Collaboration and Improvisation.	Understanding the characteristics and structure of murder mystery narratives. Familiarity with common themes such as crime, investigation and suspense. Recognising and deploying typical characters such as the detective, the suspect, the victim and the culprit; understanding the motivations and backstories that drive these characters. Learning to construct a coherent and engaging mystery plot. Mastery of techniques for building techniques and delivering plot twists. Skills developed include characterisation, narrative skills and collaboration.	Expanding understanding of classical text, historical context, and universal themes (conflict, love, fate).	In this unit, students shift from text-based drama to contemporary physical theatre, learning the core methodology of the Frantic Assembly company. Practically, they will develop physical control, spatial awareness, and ensemble synchronization to build complex physical sequences. They will learn how to safely execute physical lifts, use touch and weight-bearing to convey meaning, and collaboratively devise movement from abstract stimuli in a chair duet.	In this unit, students master the Devising process by analysing an abstract stimulus to extract themes and brainstorm original concepts. Practically, they organise these ideas into sophisticated dramatic structures using linear, non-linear, and split-screen storytelling. By integrating the physical techniques of Frantic Assembly and the characterisation skills from Romeo and Juliet, students independently generate, select, and refine material through continuous peer evaluation to maximise its theatrical impact.	Understanding the characteristics and structure of soap operas, including episodic storytelling, cliffhangers and ensemble casts. Exploring the themes commonly found in soap operas, such as family drama, romance, conflict and social issues. Recognising and employing typical soap opera characters such as the hero, the villain, the love interest and the comic relief. Understanding character development and how long-term arcs are constructed. Learning about the use of dramatic tension, dialogue and staging to create engaging and relatable narratives. Exploring the role of setting, costume and props in enhancing the realism and appeal of soap operas. Skills developed include characterisation, scripted and improvised performance and collaboration.
Why This	Melodrama and Commedia Dell'Arte are highly engaging styles for Year 8 students, offering humour and physicality that are appealing and accessible. These styles introduce fundamental dramatic techniques such as exaggerated expression and physicality, essential for developing broader theatrical skills.	Murder mystery is a highly engaging genre that stimulates students' creativity and critical thinking. It challenges them to think deeply about character motivation and plot construction. The scheme allows students to practice a range of skills, from improvisation and characterisation to scriptwriting and collaboration	Building on Year 7's Macbeth, this unit advances students from basic plot summaries to deep textual and character analysis. The themes of peer conflict, family loyalty, and youthful identity directly resonate with Year 8 students, keeping classical theatre relatable. By unpacking and performing complex Jacobean verse, students master vocal inflection and subtext, bridging the gap between historical literature and live performance while laying the academic groundwork required for GCSE Drama.	Introduces students to modern, collaborative physical theatre, shifting their focus from traditional, script-heavy naturalism to abstract, movement-based storytelling. It challenges Year 8 students to break out of their comfort zones by using the body, weight-bearing, and ensemble choreography to express complex subtext and emotional truth that words often cannot capture. The unit forces students to heighten their spatial awareness, mutual reliance, and physical discipline, diversifying their theatrical toolkit and opening their minds to contemporary devising methods.	This unit serves as the pinnacle of the students' theatrical journey, shifting them from interpreters of text to completely independent creators. By starting with an abstract stimulus, it challenges students to think critically, collaborate deeply, and take absolute ownership of their artistic choices. Devising forces them to synthesise everything they have learned from basic staging to advanced physical theatre and apply it to an original piece of theatre.	Soap operas are a familiar and engaging genre for students, providing a relatable and accessible way to explore dramatic storytelling. The genre offers opportunities to develop a wide range of acting and production skills, from character development to collaborative scene creation.
Why Now	Year 8s are at a stage where they are exploring identity and self-expressions. The exaggerated and clear-cut nature of these styles allows them to explore these aspects in a safe and controlled way. At this point students have been introduced to basic drama concepts and are ready to delve into more specialised and historically significant forms of theatre.	Year 8 students are ready to handle more complex narratives and characters, making it an ideal time to introduce the layered storytelling of murder mysteries. The scheme builds on the foundational drama skills developed in Year 7, adding complexity and depth to their understanding and performance abilities.	A deliberate transition from the narrative suspense mastered in Murder Mystery to complex, classical text analysis. With the physical presence from Commedia dell'arte and the vocal control from Unit 2 securely established, students possess the performance stamina and maturity required to tackle Shakespeare's tragic themes. This timing leverages their growing confidence to unpack complex Jacobean verse and deep character motivations rather than getting bogged down by basic staging mechanics, creating a seamless bridge into the physically demanding contemporary theatre styles coming up next.	Continues to explore the mature performance stamina and deep emotional literacy students developed during Romeo and Juliet. Last half term students explored high-stakes themes like conflict, loyalty, and tragedy; students are primed to translate these intense internal motivations into physical movement. On the other hand, after a term of heavy text analysis, this unit offers a timely shift from spoken dialogue to abstract physicality, introducing essential ensemble-building and collaborative trust right before they take complete creative independence in the upcoming Devising unit.	Students now possess the mature practical toolkit and emotional intelligence required to collaborate effectively. Moving this unit to the end of the year gives them the ultimate creative freedom to step away from scripted constraints, putting them in the director's chair to test their independent theatre-making skills right before they transition into the advanced demands of Key Stage 4 and GCSE Drama.	Year 8 students are at an age where they can appreciate and relate to the interpersonal dynamics and social issues depicted in soap operas. Students have developed foundational drama skills and are ready to apply these to a structured and recognisable genre, enhancing their understanding and performance abilities.
SMCS link	Students explore exaggerated characters and stock roles, learning to collaborate and entertain. They also discover the cultural roots of historical European theatre styles	This unit promotes teamwork, logical thinking and empathy as students create and solve dramatic puzzles. It encourages moral reflection on justice, truth and human behaviour.	They experience spiritual and moral growth by exploring the psychological impacts of generational conflict, the destructive nature of prejudice, and the tragic consequences of unchecked emotion. Fosters social awareness as students collaborate to analyse intense peer dynamics, family loyalties, and community fracturing. Finally, cultural understanding is enriched as students bridge the gap between historic Jacobean societal norms and modern audience perspectives.	Students experience spiritual and moral growth by developing absolute reliance on their peers, cultivating the empathy and vulnerability necessary to safely execute complex physical lifts and weight-bearing choreography. Crucially, the unit fosters social and cultural awareness as students use contemporary physical theatre to collaboratively communicate deep emotional subtext, breaking away from traditional text to explore how universal human stories can be told through abstract, non-verbal movement.	Students experience spiritual and moral growth as they explore abstract stimuli to express their own unique voices, learning to navigate and respect diverse perspectives within a collaborative group. Furthermore, it strengthens their social and cultural development by requiring them to actively listen, compromise, and co-create an original performance that reflects contemporary human experiences and cultural themes.	Students explore moral dilemmas and everyday issues in a dramatic format. They reflect on society, identity and relationships, while learning about a key part of British media culture.
Links to Prior Learning	In Year 7, students have acquired a basic understanding of drama elements and conventions, including Melodrama explored in Summer 1 of Year 7. Initial exposure to character creation and simple improv. This scheme allows students to enhance and refine their ability to create a character, deepening understanding of performance dynamics and audience engagement and expanding improvisational skills with a more structured and stylistic focus	The scheme builds on the ability to create multi-dimensional characters, deepening understanding of narrative structure and audience engagement and expanding improvisational skills with a focus on maintaining suspense and mystery.	Romeo and Juliet directly builds on the foundational Shakespearean narrative skills and tragic stakes established during the Year 7 Macbeth unit. Additionally, students leverage the heightened vocal control, character archetypes, and plot-building mechanics mastered in the recent Commedia dell'Arte and Murder Mystery units to confidently interpret and perform the play's complex Jacobean verse.	The Frantic Assembly unit directly links on the heightened physical control and spatial awareness students established in Commedia dell'Arte and Sparkleshark. Additionally, it repurposes the emotional literacy, conflict dynamics, and character motivations mastered in Romeo and Juliet, allowing students to seamlessly translate these intense internal themes into stylised, non-verbal choreography.	The Devising unit acts as the culmination of the year, drawing directly on the robust characterisation skills from Romeo and Juliet and the abstract, non-verbal ensemble choreography mastered in Frantic Assembly. Students will also revitalise early Year 8 techniques, such as split-stage and crosscutting from their news report work, repurposing these structural devices to manipulate time and space within their own original performances.	Builds on enhancing the ability to create multi-dimensional characters. Deepening understanding of narrative structure and character development and expanding improvisational skills with a focus on creating realistic and engaging scenarios
Links to Future Learning	The scheme provides preparation for studying more complex and varied theatrical styles, such as Shakespeare. The development of critical skills for GCSE Drama, particularly in character analysis, performance skills and understanding historical context. It lays the groundwork for advanced improvisational skills and devising original performances.	Preparation for studying more sophisticated and varied theatrical styles such as psychological drama. Development of critical skills for GCSE Drama, particularly in script analysis, character development and plot construction. Laying the groundwork for advanced improvisation techniques and creating original, complex performances.	Romeo and Juliet directly prepares students for the Devising unit later this year, where they will use these text-analysis and narrative-structuring skills to create original work from complex stimuli. Furthermore, the unit lays the vital academic and textual groundwork required for tackling advanced classical scripts and written analytical components in GCSE Drama.	The Frantic Assembly unit establishes the advanced ensemble trust and physical devising techniques necessary for students to independently create their own original, high-level stimuli-driven performances in the upcoming Devising unit and at GCSE Drama.	This unit directly prepares students for Year 9 Drama, where they will apply these independent theatre-making skills to tackle more mature, politically charged stimuli and complex practitioner methodologies like Brecht and Stanislavski. Furthermore, it serves as a direct foundation for GCSE Drama, specifically Component 1 (Devising Drama), equipping students with the exact skills needed to collaborate, generate original material from a stimulus, and critically document their creative process in their written portfolios.	Preparation for more advanced studies in drama, including contemporary theatre as well as Media Studies. Development of critical skills for GCSE Drama, particularly in script analysis, character study and ensemble performances. Laying the groundwork for advanced techniques in creating and performing serialised narratives.
Assessment and Feedback	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.	Ongoing observation; continuous monitoring of participation, creativity and collaboration. Encouraging students to evaluate their own and peers' performances, fostering a reflective learning environment. Group performances that showcase their understanding and application of techniques. Immediate verbal feedback to guide and improve performances.