

More than just a story... The importance of drama



Each summer term, many primary and prep schools end their Year 6 KS2 journey with a public performance of a musical, play or even a pantomime. This is not because teachers have run out of curriculum content at the end of Year 6, or that we want all students to go on to be actors! So, why has this become a convention? In short, 'putting on' a play can be an incredibly rich learning experience for young people, whilst it is also an opportunity to stretch and challenge students in a range of capacities.

Stories have an important place in helping children and adults alike to understand the world we live in. Through stories we are invited to explore different cultures, characters, relationships and emotions. We can travel to new places and realms. They aid us in evolving an enhanced appreciation of ourselves and the roles we can adopt amongst our peers. Every year, I choose the story that my students will discover through our production with great care. Often, coming-of-age tales seem incredibly relevant; stories where characters go on rich adventures, face complex challenges and have no choice but to learn and grow from their mistakes. Tales where characters must work together to achieve a common goal, or where children's voices hold important messages that are heard by the adults around them are also subjects that young people connect with and are inspired by.

If every opportunity is seized, there is wonderful

scope for creating a powerful cross-curricular approach to developing a show. By learning about the literature, history, art, music, and dance that surrounds a story, we cultivate an appreciation for traditions, beliefs, design and stagecraft. As part of the preparations for our school's recent production of *The Lion King* this term, the girls studied the patterns, designs and colours used in African prints before creating their own designs for fabrics, masks and marketing materials. They studied each character in the script and crafted symbols and emblems to represent them; meticulously forming links between characters who were related or belonged to the same group. Later, these were hand printed onto fabrics using block printing techniques so that they could finally be made into the cast's costumes. Through workshops with external educators, they learnt about the importance and significance of symbolism in Adinkra printing; the rhythms

and collective energy used in African drumming; and the storytelling techniques, as well as traditional movements, that can be generated through dance.

We focused on the importance of recycling materials and made masks and props out of plastic milk bottles. This process was

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OPEN EVENTS from 9.45 am

Thursday 17th November 2022

Friday 3rd February 2023

Thursday 9th March 2023

prepadmissions@stcatherines.info



St Catherine's Prep, Bramley

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