

# Queen Elizabeth High School

## Arts Policy

'We believe that the creative and performing arts make a unique contribution to the education of young people.'

*QEHS Prospectus: Headteacher's foreword.*

### **Introduction**

Arts education at QEHS is an entitlement for all students both within the formal curriculum and through extra-curricular and community activities. All students have access to a wide range of arts experiences both as individual disciplines and collaborative ventures. The arts play a key role in promoting developments in teaching and learning across the curriculum.

We work with our local community and the wider community in pursuance of these aims by collaborating with other schools, community groups, professional artists and arts organisations to forge creative partnerships.

As a community school we offer opportunities in the arts to all young people and adults in our catchment area and celebrate achievement.

### **Aims**

Our work is based on the belief that the artist is in everyone and aims to:

- develop young people and adults as imaginative, creative beings with a lifelong interest in the arts;
- develop skills and confidence in using the languages of the arts to communicate ideas about, and understanding of, their world;
- develop skills for life and living including citizenship;
- develop awareness and appreciation of the rich cultural diversity of art.

In pursuance of these aims we provide all young people with opportunities to:

- have experience of, and develop skills in, a range of art forms;
- develop skills in a range of media;
- develop the skills of collaborative endeavour;
- develop the confidence to share their work with others and to enjoy this.

We aim to nurture and develop the expertise of our staff to identify and share best practice and to make our expertise and resources available to our community.

### **Practice**

#### **(i) Staff**

Staff in art, music and drama are all specialists and many are arts practitioners, performing, writing and designing. They pursue their own development as artists as well as teachers through courses and experiences here and abroad. Staff are involved with a wide range of bodies including the Queen's Hall Arts Centre, The Centre for Performance Research, the Baltic and the Gateshead SAGE Music Centre.

There is a dedicated arts technician and a senior audio-visual technician. Both support students with project work in addition to providing technical support to staff.

Many other staff participate in arts activities for instance singing in the choir or performing as musicians in a semi-professional capacity. Many non-specialists run clubs and activities.

We employ a wide range of staff in addition to permanent teaching staff for specific purposes for instance musical instrument tuition or choreography. Many are professional artists.

**(ii) Arts Management**

The Arts Management Board monitors and reports on the arts at QEHS. It consists of: community representatives; governors, students; staff from QEHS and partnership schools.

**(iii) The Curriculum**

**a. KS3**

All students study art, music, drama and dance at KS3 as separate subjects. They study literature and the media in English and design technology. Additional dance is taught through PE. Art, music and drama each has one hour per week and English three hours.

There are also major events which cross timetable boundaries such as a Shakespeare Day and a research project using Dorothy Heathcote's new paradigm of education and workshops and events run by professionals.

**b. KS4**

All students opt for an arts or design technology subject to be taken to GCSE: students may take two arts options. A third option is available through GCSE dance as a twilight class and we offer a BTEC First in Performing Arts (double option). All students study literature and media in English. Each GCSE option has two and a half hours each week, English has three and a half hours.

**c. 16+**

We offer courses in art (including drawing and painting, graphics and textiles), music, music technology, drama, English literature and media studies.

We are planning to introduce BTEC National in Performing Arts in September 2006.

Each AS or A2 option has five hours a week and students take four subjects often combining arts and sciences for instance.

**d. ICT**

ICT plays an increasingly important role in arts education including graphic design, music technology, lighting design and control, video production and use of a virtual learning environment.

**e. Whole school developments**

The arts play an increasingly important role in whole school developments in teaching and learning and in staff development. For instance, creative bursaries are offered to staff in all subject departments to research creative approaches to teaching and learning and to develop methodology.

**(iv) Extra-Curricular**

QEHS has a vibrant extra-curricular life. Extension activities of between one and three hours are offered in the arts every day and often at weekends. These are combined with community activities engaging young people as young as eight or nine and adults of all ages. All activities are open to all students.

Students are offered opportunities for tuition and coaching, to join clubs and performance groups and to enhance or develop work done in the formal curriculum.

In music: instrumental tuition; orchestra; wind band; choir; steel panners; stage band; acappella group; soul band; ceilidh band; rock bands; world drumming; performances for examinations; and small ensembles.

In drama: junior youth theatre (11-13) and QEHS youth theatre (13+), meeting all year round and putting on three performances each year. There are opportunities in acting, singing, dance, designing, writing, directing and technical work.

In art and design: art club, photography and life-drawing evening classes; extension classes after school. Annual exhibitions of students' work.

The English Department organises an annual Book Week.

There is a huge range of trips to the theatre, to concerts, to exhibitions, galleries and museums.

**(v) Working with the Community.**

**(a) The Hexham Partnership**

We employ a half-time community arts worker and provide funding for QEHS staff to work in the community in a variety of roles.

We organise collective arts activities including concerts, exhibitions and drama activities with the first, middle and special schools in our partnership. We also work closely with Dilston Mencap College to provide opportunities for all our students and to stage special events.

**(b) Artists and Arts Organisations**

We have an artist and writer in residence.

We work with professional artists such as musicians and theatre groups.

We subscribe to the National Campaign for the Arts.

We are involved with a wide range of bodies such as Tynedale Artists' Network, the Gateshead SAGE Music Centre, the Centre for Performance Research, the Baltic and the Queen's Hall Arts Centre.

**(c) Community Education**

Through our Community Education Department we provide classes and activities for young people (youth service) and adults. These are tutored by professional artists and include photography, life drawing, patchwork and quilting and various dance classes.

We also work with community groups such as the Hexham and Corbridge Youth Initiatives and ADAPT (Association for Differently Able People in Tynedale).

Community arts groups use the school as a performance venue: we also provide rehearsal space, equipment loan and technical support.

**(vi) Facilities:**

These include:

two large music rooms (both equipped for music technology), a music technology room with recording equipment, a number of practice rooms and a recording studio;  
two drama teaching rooms equipped with lighting and sound equipment;  
one additional shared space;  
two performance spaces, one equipped with GSX III lighting desk and PA;  
four specialist art rooms, a computer design room and studio space;  
a digital video editing suite.

**(vii) Future Plans**

Future plans include:

building a theatre space with capacity for an audience of 150 (start date November 2005);

refurbished drama studio;

introduction of BTEC National in Performing Arts;

a Hexham Partnership Festival.

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