Children's Services

Secondary Drama Conference

20th October 2026

Chris Vaudin, HIAS Inspector Adviser

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council

Improvement and Advisory Service

Secondary Drama Conference 2026

20 October 2026

A new act begins: a connected future for drama

Welcome!

Aims

1

Establish a positive climate of trust and mutual endeavour

2

Dedicate space and time to reflect on the impact of our efforts

3

Identify common priorities and opportunities

4

Celebrate the life-changing importance of the work you do

Your story in drama…

Turn to the person next to you and share three key moments or memories that led to you doing what you do

Your work matters

Dramatic experiences make memories that last a lifetime

CULTURAL LEARNING ALLIANCE

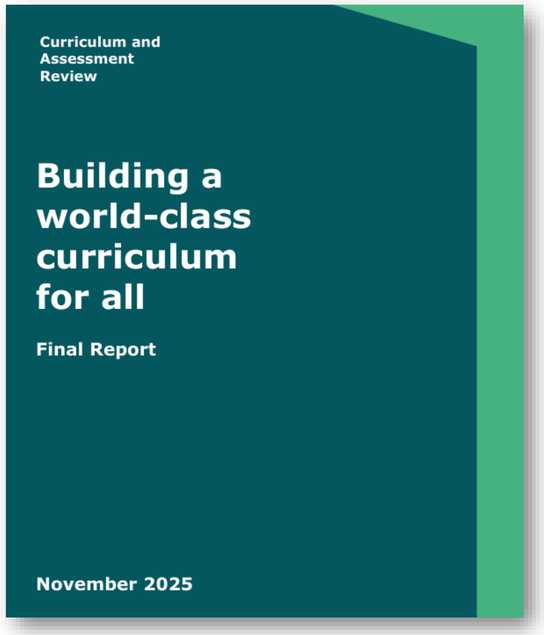
Capabilities Framework

	Capabilities	Personal Benefits	Societal Benefits
Being, Belonging & Becoming	Agency	Autonomy, Confidence, Identity	Independent working, Active citizenship
	Wellbeing	Flourishing, Pleasure, Resilience	Adaptability, Mental health, Sense of belonging & purpose
Relating	Collaboration	Connection, Co-operation, Participation	Teamwork, Reciprocity
	Communication	Listening, Relationship building, Self-expression	Interpersonal skills, Improved understanding of others
	Empathy	Compassion, Open-mindedness, Understanding of difference	Social bonding, Civic engagement
Cognition & Critical Thinking	Creativity	Curiosity, Imagination, Originality	Innovation, Cultural maker/consumer
	Interpretation	Critical thinking, Meaning making, Reflective Judgement	Challenging disinformation, Informed decision-making

A moment for optimism…?



Curriculum and Assessment Review



We recommend that the Government:

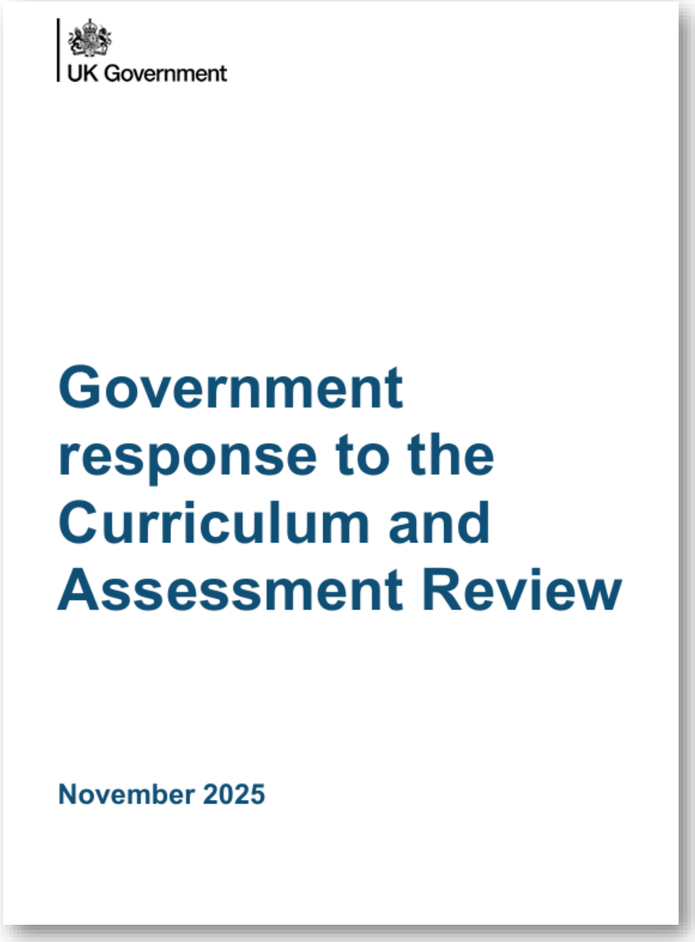
Updates the Key Stage 3 English Programme of Study to include a discrete section on Drama. This should include more detail to provide greater clarity about expectations for performing, creating and responding to dramatic works. Greater specificity about Drama should be added to the Key Stage 1 and 2 English Programmes of Study, aiming to build solid foundations and support transition to Key Stage 3.

Reviews the subject content for GCSE Drama, assessment methods and the balance of assessment to ensure that the qualification is up to date, suited to the discipline and enables progression to further study and careers in drama and theatre.

DfE Response

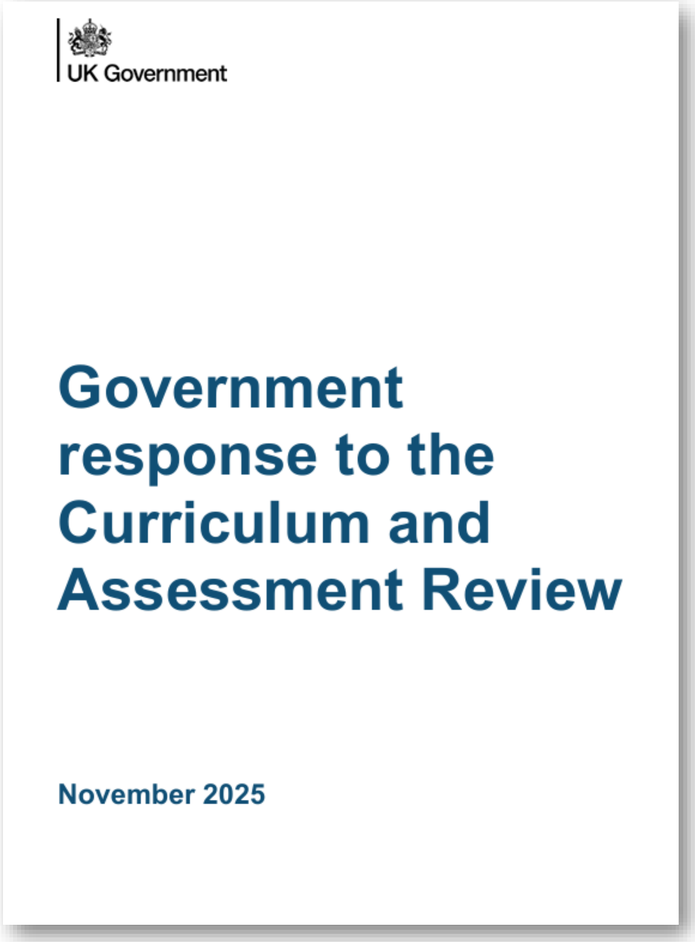
“we will revitalise arts education as part of the reformed national curriculum and through high-quality support for teachers of these subjects”

“The arts subjects are an entitlement rather than an optional extra and are unique pedagogies that the best schools teach with expertise and rigour. For example, the study of creative subjects can allow pupils to harness the process of creative endeavour, generating original works, fluency of communication and teamwork.”



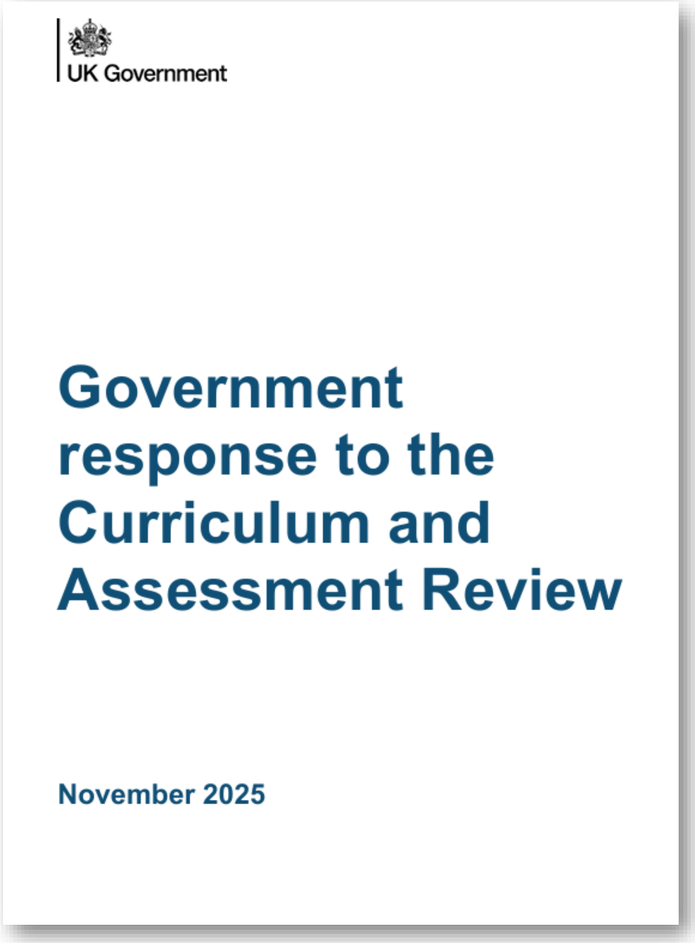
DfE Response

“We agree with the Review that drama plays an important role in a broad curriculum, and that it supports the development of a range of knowledge and skills including creativity and oracy. We consider drama to be an important artistic discipline in its own right, helping pupils to find their voice and express their ideas, on stage and off.”



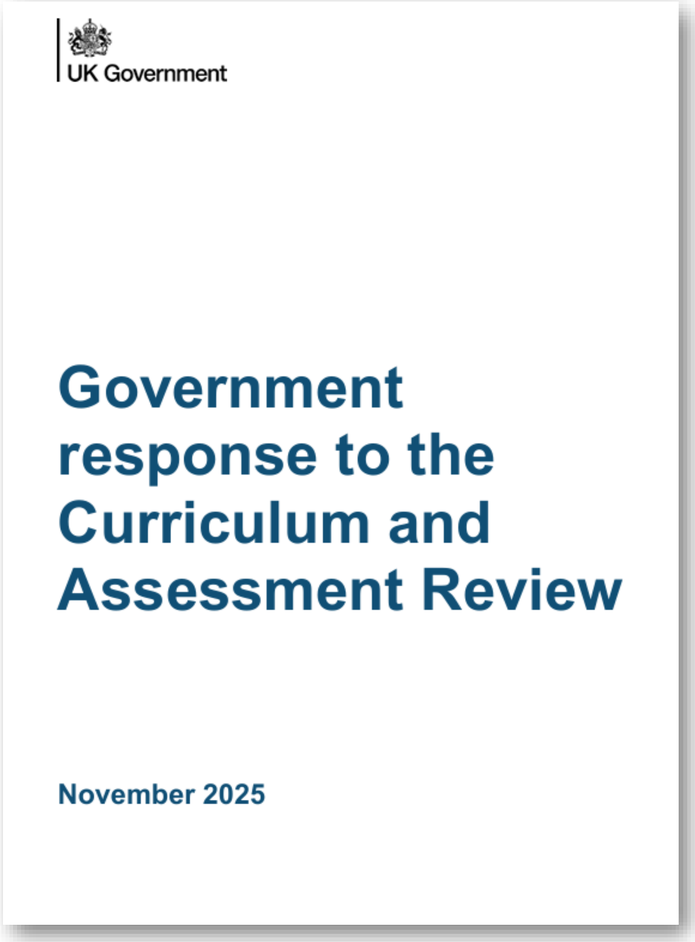
DfE Response

We agree that the brilliant practice seen in many schools already and particularly at secondary is to be celebrated and we want to ensure this is reflected in the curriculum, supporting progression to further study. As the Review suggests, we will consider whether further detail and clarity at primary could enable a stronger drama offer within English and will create a discrete drama section within the key stage 3 programme of study.

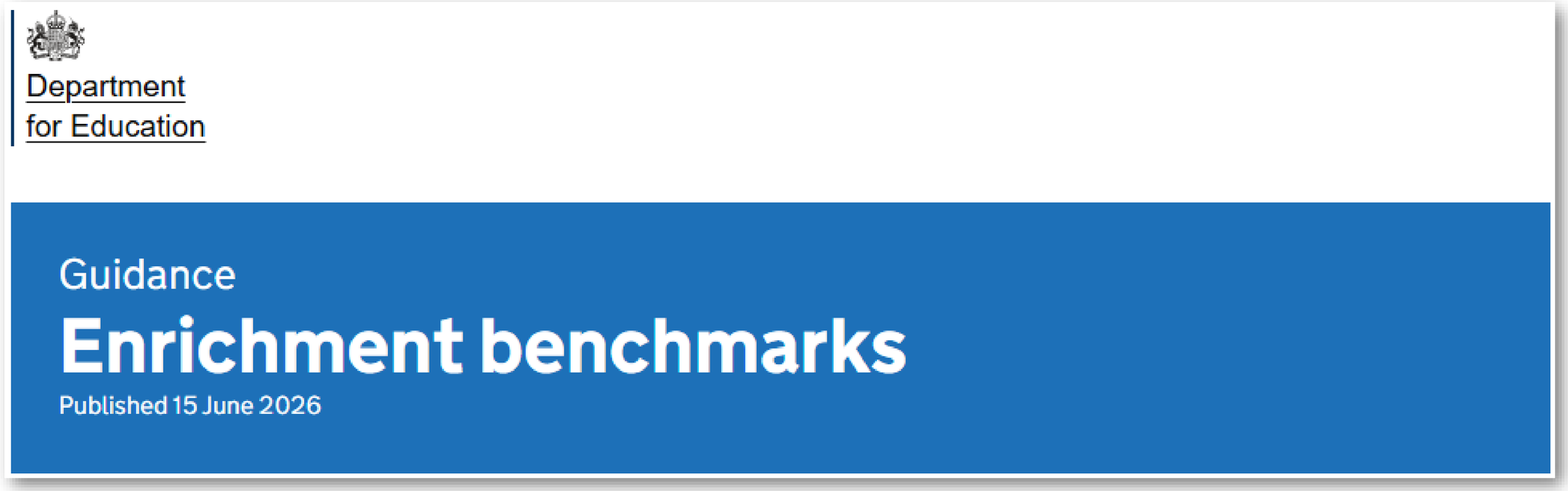


DfE Response

We want to ensure that teaching of drama at GCSE connects to and builds from pupils' experience at key stage 3, so the subject continues to be engaging for them and prepares them for future study. We also recognise the opportunity to promote further diversity in the body of work studied at GCSE. As recommended, **we will review GCSE drama subject content against the balance of assessment methods and approaches to achieve this.**

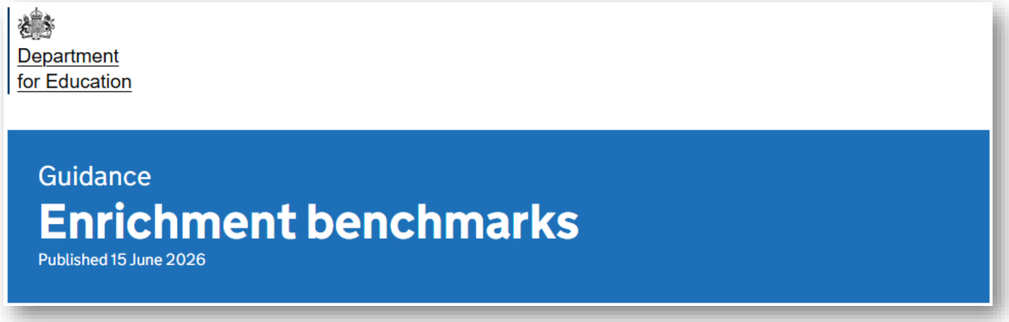


Enrichment Framework



This guidance sets out 8 benchmarks for enrichment to provide a clear, simple structure against which schools and colleges can effectively evaluate their own provision and make appropriate and considered improvements to their offer.

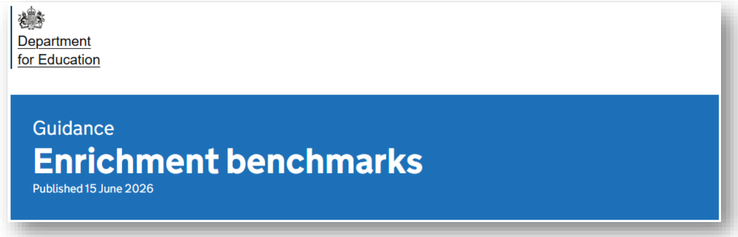
Enrichment Framework



Summary of the benchmarks:

1. A strategically aligned enrichment offer
2. A broad and well-rounded enrichment offer
3. A well-communicated enrichment offer that celebrates participation and achievement
4. An enrichment offer shaped by the school or college community
5. An accessible and engaging enrichment offer
6. An enrichment offer that works in partnership
7. An outcomes-focused enrichment offer
8. A continually improving enrichment offer

Enrichment Framework



2. A broad and well-rounded enrichment offer

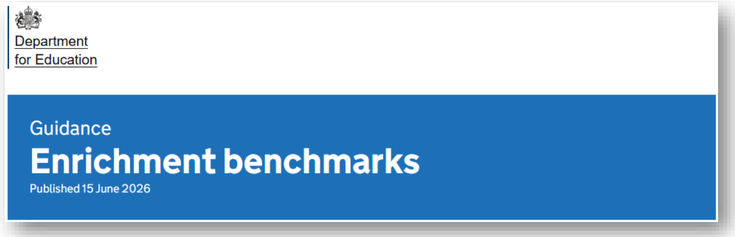
Pupils and students have multiple and varied opportunities to engage in enrichment activities that are purposeful, fun and can support a thriving childhood and successful transition to adulthood. This could include through supporting wellbeing and social skills.

Indicator

2.1. Every pupil and student has access to a range of activities including at a minimum the following 5 categories:

- civic engagement, for example volunteering, debating, school and college democracy, community engagement
- arts and culture, for example, taking part in and having live experience of music, art, dance, theatre, other expressive arts, visits to museums and galleries
- nature, outdoors and adventure, for example time outdoors, climate education and sustainability projects, gardening, residentials and camps
- sport and physical activities, for example participating in individual and team sports, physical activities like dance, fitness activities or cycling, representing the school or college, attending live events
- developing wider life and future skills, for example digital literacy, STEM clubs, cooking, managing finances, enterprise and (for colleges only) teaching Relationships and Sex Education

Enrichment Framework



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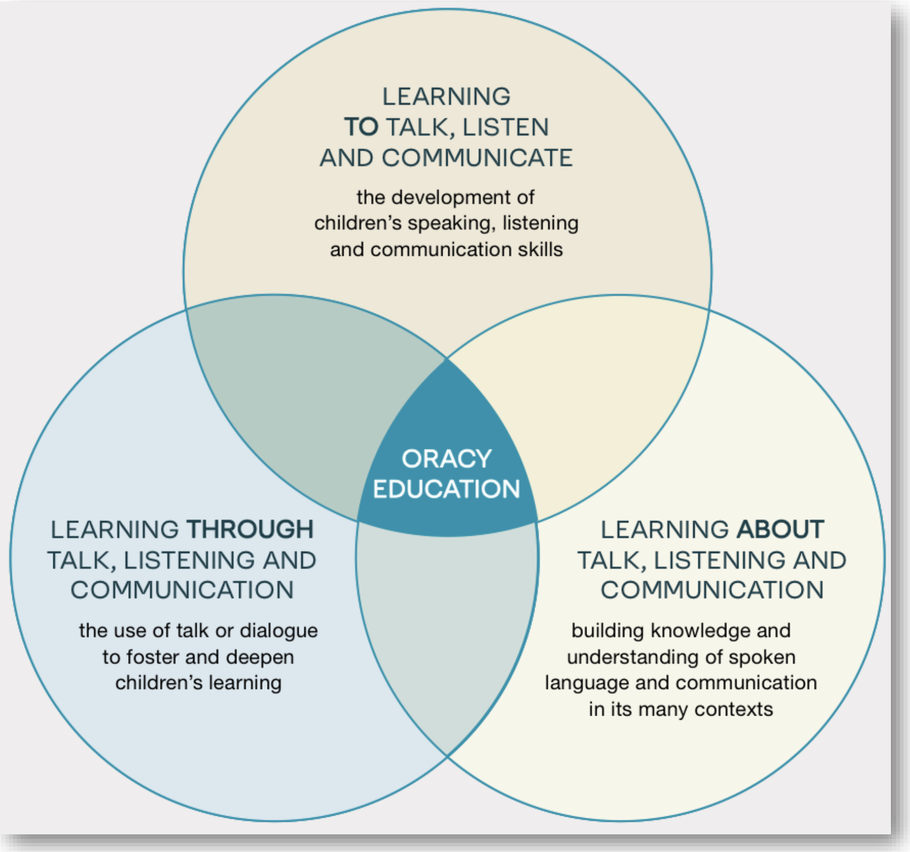
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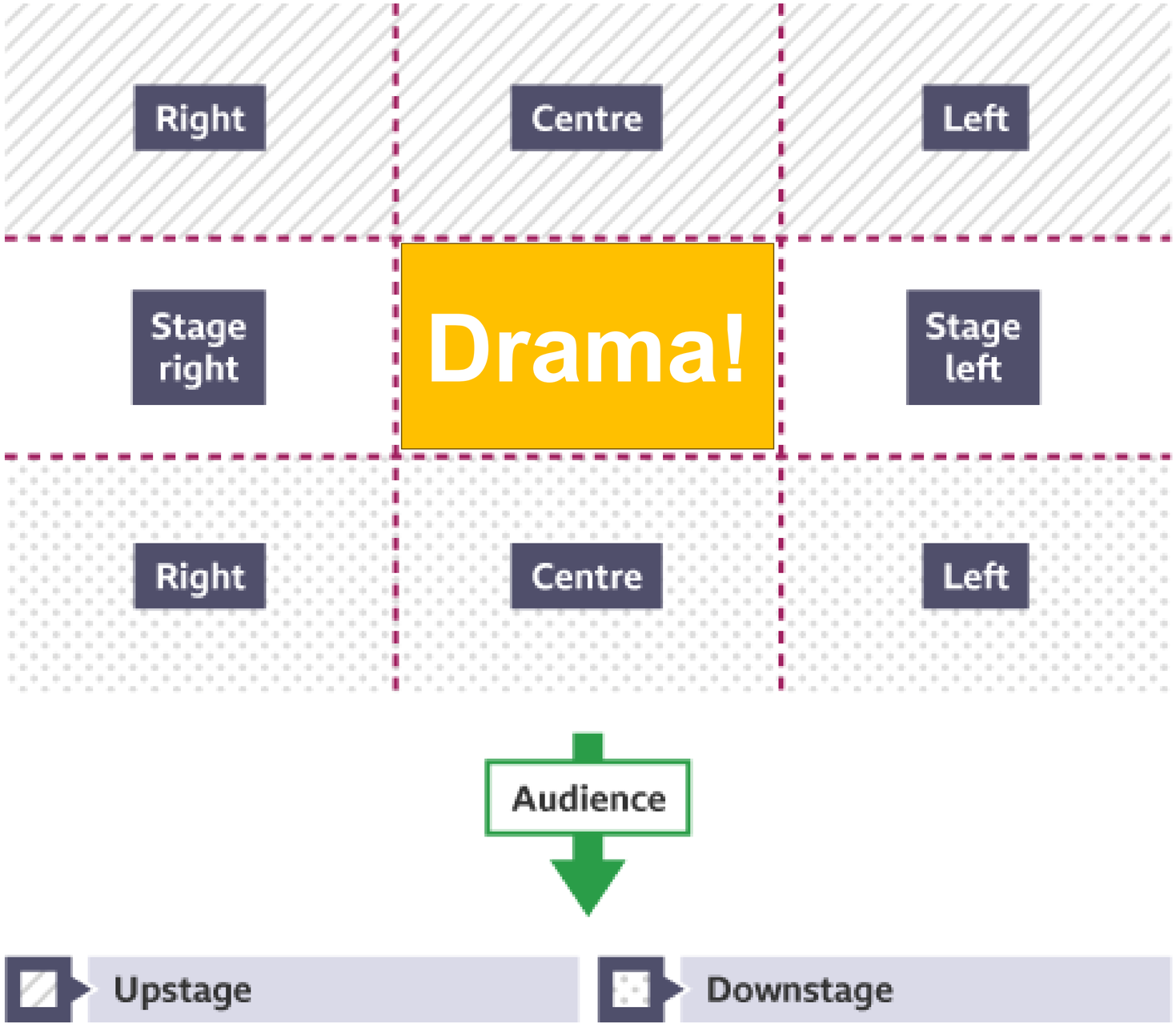
Oracy Commission

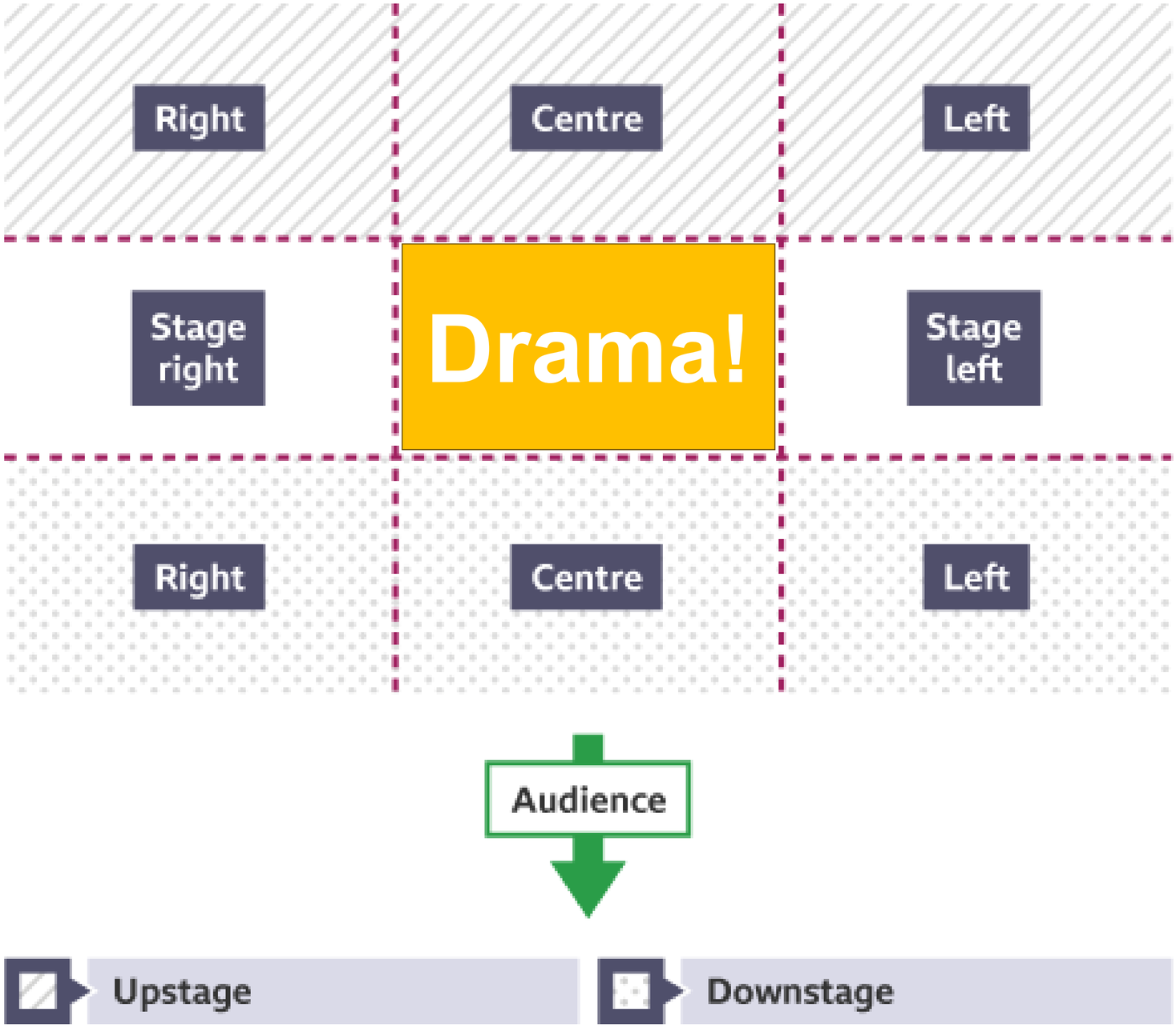


3.2.5 Arts education

Arts education offers unique conditions and contexts for pupils to engage in dialogue, express themselves and develop their oracy skills through creative processes.

Opportunities to speak, listen and engage in creativity and experimentation, which can be developed through arts education, play a crucial role in children's development.


Right
Centre
Left
Stage right
Drama!
Stage left
Right
Centre
Left
Audience
Upstage
Downstage



How can we seize the opportunity to advocate for our subject at a time of change?

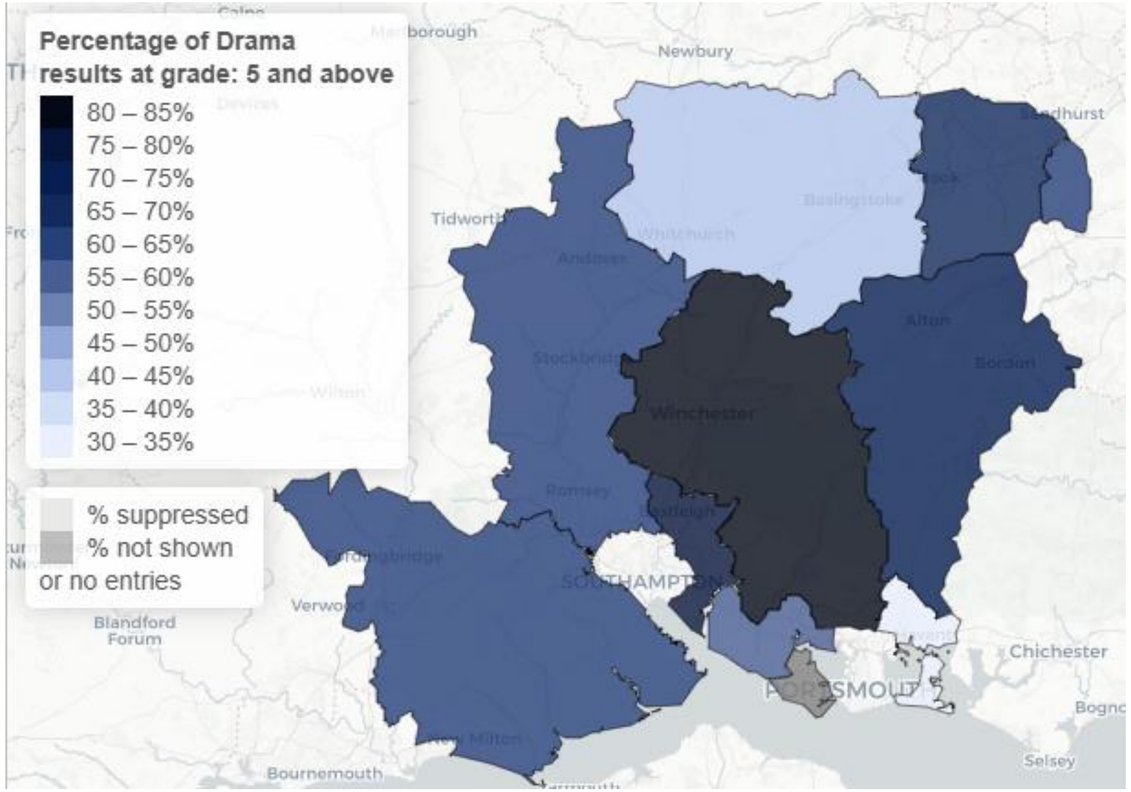
Together

Where are we now?

Key Stage 4 Results 2026: *Hampshire*

	Hants 2026 (25)
4+	**76.0%** (74.2%)
5+	**62.2%** (60.2%)
7+	**24.3%** (20.9%)

Figures are based on unvalidated results as provided by Ofqual



Survey

Total responses: 45 secondary schools

KS3 drama: The great majority teach Drama as a discrete subject at KS3, typically with curriculum time at between <1 or between 1–2 hours per week.

Staffing: Most departments are small (1–3 teachers) and many report **non-specialist staff** teaching some Drama.

GCSE

40/45 schools offer GCSE drama

Exam board	Number of Schools	Proportion
AQA	23	57.5%
OCR	6	15%
Pearson/Edexcel	6	15%
Eduqas / WJEC	5	12.5%

No longer offering after this September's cohort

Several schools explicitly mention:

- recent or planned **exam board switching**
- uncertainty around **future national curriculum and qualification reforms**

Non-GCSE/vocational options

14/45 schools offer a non-GCSE/vocational course either alongside or in place of GCSE

Most frequently cited qualifications

BTEC / Pearson Level 2 Performing Arts

WJEC / Eduqas Performing Arts Technical Awards

OCR Cambridge Nationals

LAMDA (often extra-curricular rather than core timetable)

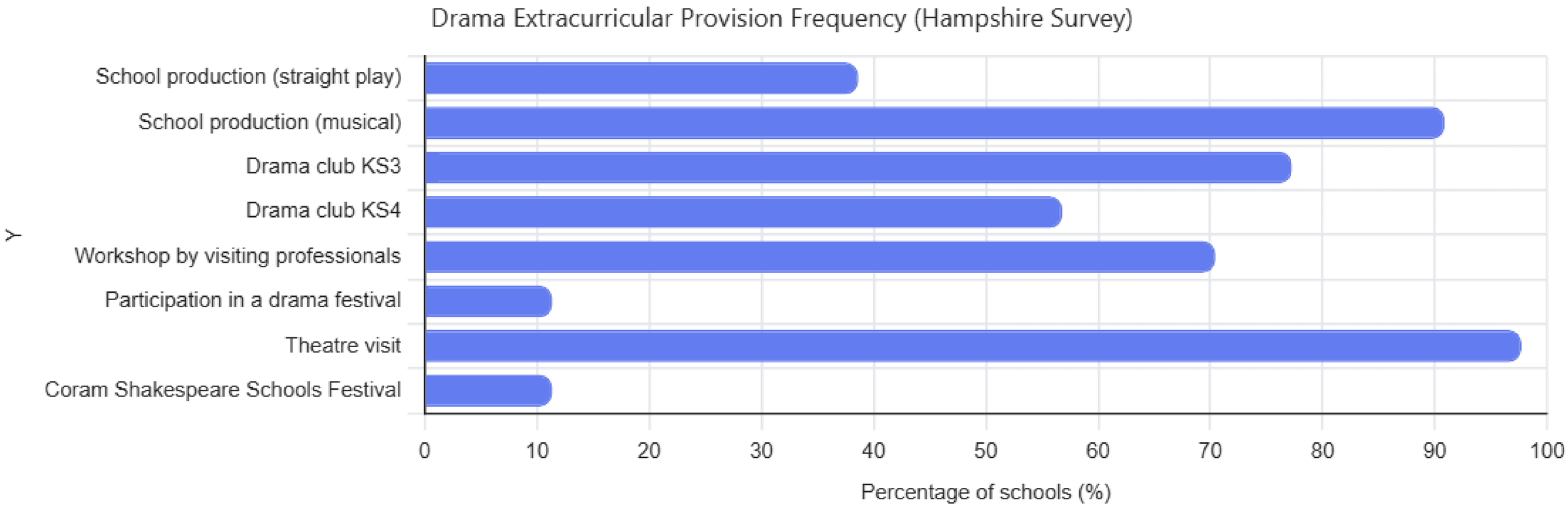
Interpretation

A significant minority of schools maintain vocational pathways, often:

- alongside GCSE Drama
- to support SEND, engagement, or mixed ability cohorts

Several schools report phasing out BTEC/Tech Awards because of reform uncertainty.

Extra-curricular



Key Themes

Regular mention of partnerships with:

- Regional theatres (e.g. Mayflower, Chichester Festival Theatre, Wyvern Theatre)
- Touring companies and practitioners (e.g. Paper Birds)

Schools value:

- Workshops, auditions, and practitioner-led experiences
- Exposure to professional performance environments

Professional Development Priorities

1. Exam, Assessment and Standards
2. Devising, Rehearsal and Practical Pedagogy
3. Working With Practitioners & Industry Links
4. Curriculum Development (KS3–KS4 coherence)
5. Networking and Subject Community

Exam, Assessment and Standards

Most frequently referenced priorities

- Writing for the **written exam**
- **Live theatre evaluation**
- Understanding **mark schemes and moderation**
- Raising attainment at **grades 7–9**
- **Assessment at KS3** and progression to KS4

"Assessment, preparation for GCSE"

"Written element"

"Gaining 9s in the written paper"

"GCSE moderation opportunities"

"Approaching the set text"

Devising, Rehearsal and Practical Pedagogy

Schools consistently ask for **practical, usable CPD**, including:

- Devising structures and starting points
- Rehearsal techniques
- Physical theatre
- Monologue writing
- KS3 practical project design

"Devising drama and techniques"

"Physical theatre"

"Rehearsal techniques and development of plays"

"More practical sessions to get ideas"

Working With Practitioners & Industry Links

Many respondents explicitly requested:

- Workshops with **professional theatre practitioners**
- Support accessing professionals **without high cost**
- Increased exposure to **technical and production roles**

"Practitioners"

"Technical theatre"

"Lighting and sound"

"Working directly with practitioners"

Curriculum Development

Frequently mentioned concerns include:

- Refreshing KS3 curriculum content
- Progression from KS3 into GCSE
- Curriculum breadth and diversity
- Managing group work post-Covid



Networking and Subject Community

A striking number of responses mention:

- Loss or weakening of local drama networks
- Desire for county wide collaboration
- Professional isolation (especially small departments)

"Would be interested in networking more"

"Schools can be quite closed"

"It would be great to have something back in the county"

"Poor attendance meant it stalled – but the need is there"

Key Priorities for Drama Network

Priority 1: Strengthen Assessment and Exam Confidence

Priority 2: Improve Practical Pedagogy and Classroom Practice

Priority 3: Support Curriculum Design and KS3–KS4 Progression

Priority 4: Rebuild Subject Community and Reduce Professional Isolation

Priority 5: Maintain Awareness of Sector and Qualification Change

The Drama Network will operate using the following principles:

- ✓ **Practice-first**: CPD rooted in classroom and school realities
- ✓ **Collaborative**: valuing teacher expertise and shared problem-solving
- ✓ **Inclusive**: relevant to all exam boards and non-GCSE pathways
- ✓ **Sustainable**: realistic, manageable and respectful of workload

Coming up in Drama training

Explore what's next!

Visit our **DRAMA courses Moodle page** for full details of upcoming Learning Zone training offers.

Scan the QR code to access the page instantly



Questions?

Training queries: **hias.training@hants.gov.uk**
Booking support: **cs.learninganddevelopment@hants.gov.uk**

Today!

The Spring

Hampshire County Council
Improvement and Advisory Service

Secondary Drama Conference 2026

A new act begins: a connected future for drama

Conference Programme

Tuesday 20th October

	What	Who	Where
9.30am	Arrival		
9.40am	Welcome Setting the Scene	Laura Woodward Chris Vaudin	Harrison Room
10.00am	Practice Sharing	Steering Group	Harrison Room
11.00am	Break		
11.15am	Qualifications Reform	Sandra Allan	Harrison Room
11.30am	Exam Board Updates *Breakout Session*	AQA – Lucy Clark Pearson – (CV) Eduqas – Hayley Sheard	Harrison Room Research Room Garden Room
12.15pm	Open Space Session *Bring a question, leave with new ideas.*	All	Harrison Room Garden Room
12.45pm	Lunch		
1.15pm	Practical Devising Workshop	The Paper Birds	Theatre
3.15pm	Conclusion: *what next?*	Chris Vaudin Laura Woodward	Theatre
3.30pm	End		

The Spring Arts & Heritage Centre, 56 East Street, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1BS

Contact chris.vaudin2@hants.gov.uk if you have any questions.

hants.gov.uk

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Your feedback matters



Please scan the QR code to complete our online training evaluation form

Or access the form using the URL below:

https://forms.office.com/r/QE21XtDJ2r

Thank you!