



Ellesmere



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**Artsmark
Platinum Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England

Drama





Ellesmere College Drama and Performance

Ellesmere College Forward in its Thinking

Ellesmere College is a co-educational school for pupils aged 7-18, set in 155 acres of glorious rural North Shropshire, just half a mile from the historic canal side town of Ellesmere. Whilst rural in its location, it is a relatively short distance from a number of main-line railway stations and international airports.

The College continues to thrive and grow today due, in no small way, to our focus on the needs and development of each individual student. The College prides itself on its policy of accepting pupils across a wide range of the academic ability spectrum, but the focus on individual support and development means that all pupils can achieve their very best. It is this commitment to the individual that enables the College to welcome pupils with a wide variety of talents and ambitions.

Drama at GCSE

The first assessed piece of work is a devised piece where the students - taking influence from practical work done in Year Ten and working directly from one of three areas provided by the exam board - create their own play for performance, taking into consideration their chosen skill, whether that be acting, lighting, sound or costume. Additionally, the group are expected to understand and show an awareness of all elements of theatre craft within their final production. They also will perform a scripted piece, which they will select from a group of given options, and there is a final written exam, based on the set text of 'DNA' by Dennis Kelly.

A-level Drama and Theatre

Students at this level will select their own monologue and, as a group, select an appropriate scripted piece that they will - as actors, set designers, or technical designers - create to a high performance standard. In the second year their own artistic ambitions are pursued within the devised piece. This is a popular section of the course and many audience members look forward to it as an original piece that highlights the students innovative and imaginative theatrical ideas. The students also explore 'Lysistrata' by Aristophanes, 'Equus' by Peter Shaffer, as well as studying Methodologies of theatre practitioners.

First Class Education

The College regularly enjoys outstanding inspection reports from bodies such as the Independent Schools Inspectorate and OFSTED Child Protection, the most recent of which can be found on the College website. Academic results are excellent. Ellesmere offers the International Baccalaureate Programme alongside A-levels in the Sixth Form, and the average score for the International Baccalaureate is usually in a range equivalent to A*, A*, A* at A-level. In overall terms, the College's Sixth Form leavers usually average the equivalent in A level grades of A, B, B.

Recently, one of our International Baccalaureate Diploma candidates achieved 45 points (the top mark), formally equivalent to 6 1/2 A grades at A-level, and was one of only 100 candidates in the world to achieve that level. Given that the College continues to require only 5 GCSEs at grade C to enter the Sixth Form, the results are quite exceptional.

Wide ranges of specialist academic subjects are on offer, and these can be taken as GCSE, IGCSE, A-Level, International Baccalaureate and BTEC qualifications.

Technical Theatre

The range of people who work in a theatre is a very broad spectrum. While many students find their place on the stage, others prefer to be involved in different ways. Technical Theatre is critical to behind the scenes operations of all dramatic productions and events. Developing proper vocabulary and skills off-stage is as essential to a production as its actors.

We endeavour to introduce students to basic technical operation and design for the theatre. Students will work in both classroom and practical settings to gain an understanding of the technology and craftsmanship for the production of theatre and events.

The objective of Technical Theatre at Ellesmere is to provide the student with an elementary understanding of the process of realising a production, from the design through to the building, running, and striking. The student should gain a working knowledge of theatre terminology as well as a familiarity with basic theatre tools and techniques for scenery, paint, props, costumes, lighting, audio, video, and stage management.

Technical Theatre is offered at Ellesmere as part of the GCSE Drama and A-Level Theatre and Drama Course, as well as through the extracurricular activities such as Tech Club, public productions, and arts events.

LAMDA

The key skills that are gained through doing technical theatre at the College are not just linked to theatre but help in the development of highly transferable life skills such as leadership, time management, and communication skills.

The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) is the largest Speech and Drama awarding body in the UK. Preparation to take LAMDA examinations is provided through specialist teachers as an additional extra in the following areas:

- Acting
- Devised Drama
- Mime
- Musical Theatre
- Verse and Prose
- Reading for Performance
- Public Speaking

All students are entered for LAMDA and English Speaking Board examinations annually. The examinations for both Boards enable Years 12 and 13 students to gain a number of UCAS points depending on their grades.

House Plays

At the beginning of the year we host the Competitive House Plays. These are four student-led plays at Senior School level and three House plays at Lower School level, rehearsed throughout the year and performed to a highly enthusiastic audience and a panel of judges. Using their expert knowledge, the judges will give credit to the Houses for using different elements to create their pieces, focusing not just on the quality of acting, but also on the use of ensemble work, interpretation and directorial vision, set design, and costume, making sure all contributors - front and back stage - are given credit for their hard work.

These plays are one of the high points of the school year for both Lower and Senior School and are thematic in nature. Over the last few of years the genres explored in Senior School have been as diverse as Shakespeare's comedies, Fawlty Towers, and classic murder mysteries. For the Lower School they have devised work around 'Horrible Histories' and classic Pantomime tales.

Pupils speak positively about the opportunities to extend their interests and talents by participating in the school drama productions. **ISI report 2012**

Promoting leadership in the Arts: The Director and Assistant Director's role

Each House selects a House Director and an Assistant Director who are the motivators and coordinators for their designated Competitive House. From the very beginning of finding their cast these Sixth Form pupils coordinate their peers and run a tight schedule to get the team into shape for the competition. They are guided by weekly Director's meetings with the Director of Drama and the Theatre Manager, and are given support by their House Masters and Mistresses, but apart from that they are on their own. For approximately six weeks they organise rehearsals, make executive decisions about interpretation, design and arrange sound, and lighting. Directing is not an easy task and teaches individuals mediation, patience, organisation, integrity, and delegation skills. It is always a pleasure to see Sixth Formers take this role, grow in confidence, and blossom within their House as a result of their commitment and interaction with other team members at this level.



Tabor Academy – The American Exchange

Ellesmere College is an international school, in terms of the makeup of its student body, its delivery of the International Baccalaureate qualification, and its general ethos and 'world view'. As part of this vision it has operated a long-standing arts partnership with Tabor Academy in Massachusetts, based around a biennial exchange of student drama productions that has been happening now for twenty years. Every two years each school sends a production to the other, which tours local primary and secondary schools as well as performing at the host school. Staff and pupils at each school are given the opportunity to work with host students in workshops and classroom activities, and the sharing of good practice is a key focus. Students also get the opportunity to visit school productions in the host country as well as professional shows on Broadway or in Boston. In addition to this, students get the opportunity to make international friendships (which are often kept up long after the visit is over), as well as learn about different cultures and approaches to dramaturgy. Local schools in the Ellesmere area are offered the opportunity to welcome the American guests and their production, so there is a clear benefit beyond Ellesmere College itself.

Although the students pay the cost of the trip, the College Old Ellesmerians Committee have in the past made generous contributions towards supporting those who would otherwise not be able to go. Details of Tabor Academy can be found on the school's website:

www.taboracademy.org

Dance

Ballet and Contemporary dance lessons are available on an extra-curricular basis every week. Individual lessons are also available for Dance grade students. In addition to this, we try to see a dance show every year. We also make provision within the school timetable for workshops and dance classes in Lower School to take place.

Our dance teachers are qualified dance and drama teachers with the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts and the Imperial Society of the Teachers of Dancing. One of our teachers works at county schools giving bespoke LAMDA and dance tuition and is the Principle of Shropshire Performing Arts.

Here at Ellesmere College students can take dance lessons in different styles during the term and work towards their examinations.

Boarding at Ellesmere

The boarding houses within Ellesmere College are tailored to meet the needs of children from the age of eight upwards. All of the Housemasters and Housemistresses are provided with information on the specific needs of each student.



Scholarships and financial assistance

A Drama scholarship or award is based purely on merit. An award can be worth up to 50% of the fees (boarding or day) and is made on the basis of an assessment and an interview. Where appropriate, other skills can also be taken into account and a variety of other scholarships and all-rounder awards are available. As with all candidates for places at the College, we need to be confident when offering places that prospective pupils can thrive academically, so an academic and behavioural reference is an important part of any assessment.



Artsmark Platinum

Artsmark is the Arts Council England's flagship programme which celebrates the arts and cultural provision in a school. Ellesmere has been awarded Platinum status for our excellent arts provision.

Extract from awarding report: 'You have a determination to deliver very high quality arts education in all the key art subjects, including dance and media technology; you see the arts as central to learning in all subject areas, to raising awareness of other cultures

and to the development of the whole person; you nurture artistic talent in all students but equally value excellence and encourage the progression towards professional success in the arts; you value and reward initiative, independent learning and leadership; you have a very talented and motivated staff and a very dynamic programme of development.'

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