

# 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*

'Creativity is at the centre of our philosophy – it ties the curriculum together'.

*Director of Performing Arts, 2009*

### **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, drama and dance are 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, Gateshead SAGE Music Centre and Northern Stage.

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. There is also a community arts worker who works (part-time) with the partnership of arts schools.

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. This group meets once per term during the academic year.

### **(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 and workshops and events run by professionals.

#### **b. KS4**

At Key Stage 4, all students study literature and media within their English curriculum (3.5 hours each week). Students are then able to choose from a wide range of Arts courses. GCSEs are available in Dance, Drama, Music, Art and Design, Graphics, and Fashion & Textiles. Some students opt to take a vocational course in performing arts (BTEC First Diploma) which includes music, dance and drama. Almost all students take at least one arts course at Key Stage 4.

#### **c. 16+**

We offer courses in art, graphics, fashion & textiles, music, music technology, drama, English literature, English language and media studies at A Level. We also offer vocational options: the BTEC National Certificate in Performing Arts and BTEC National Award in Dance.

Each A Level option has five hours a week and students take four subjects, often combining arts and sciences for instance. BTEC national is five or ten hours per week.

**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: QEHS Youth Theatre (ages 13-21) runs throughout the school year and puts on two performances per 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 in school and we also have an annual show case exhibition which is professionally curated at the Queens Hall. The school also runs a European study tour for 'A' level students to places such as Paris, Barcelona.

The English Department organises an annual Book Week.

There is a 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 (18.5 hours) community arts worker and provide funding for QEHS staff to work in the community in a variety of roles.

We work closely with our three middle schools who all have performing arts college status and joint fund an Assistant Headteacher-Director of Performing Arts.

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 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, Northern Stage, the Baltic and the Queen's Hall Arts Centre.

**(c) Adult and Community Learning**

Through our Adult and Community Learning provision we provide classes and activities for young people and adults including photography, floral art, creative writing, dancing, pots for fun.

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
- theatre space with capacity for an audience of 150
- refurbished drama studio

## Targets for development 2009 – 2010

J Andriot responsible for monitoring the following annual targets

- **QEHS to co-submit the gateway bid for delivering new Creative and Media Diploma course (levels 1 – 3) as part of Tynedale Virtual College Partnership.**
- **Widen extra-curricular opportunities further with a focus on more boys' participation.**
- **Develop creativity across the curriculum and opportunities for arts subjects to collaborate with other departments on sustained curriculum projects (e.g. Holocaust day with Humanities area).**
- **Develop arts information, advice and guidance for vocational routes (KS3 and KS5 events with practitioners and organizations from all artforms and across the creative sector).**
- **Arts subject staff to continue to develop as professionals through attendance at specific CPD events (e.g. SSAT annual conference).**
- **QEHS arts staff committed to middle school development through attending liaison meetings and offering CPD to KS2 colleagues.**

**Signed:**..... **Chair of Governors** **Date:**.....

**Signed:**..... **Headteacher** **Date:**.....

**Review Date: November 2010**.....

Previous policy was agreed at inaugural meeting of the Hard Federation governing body on 11 November 2008.