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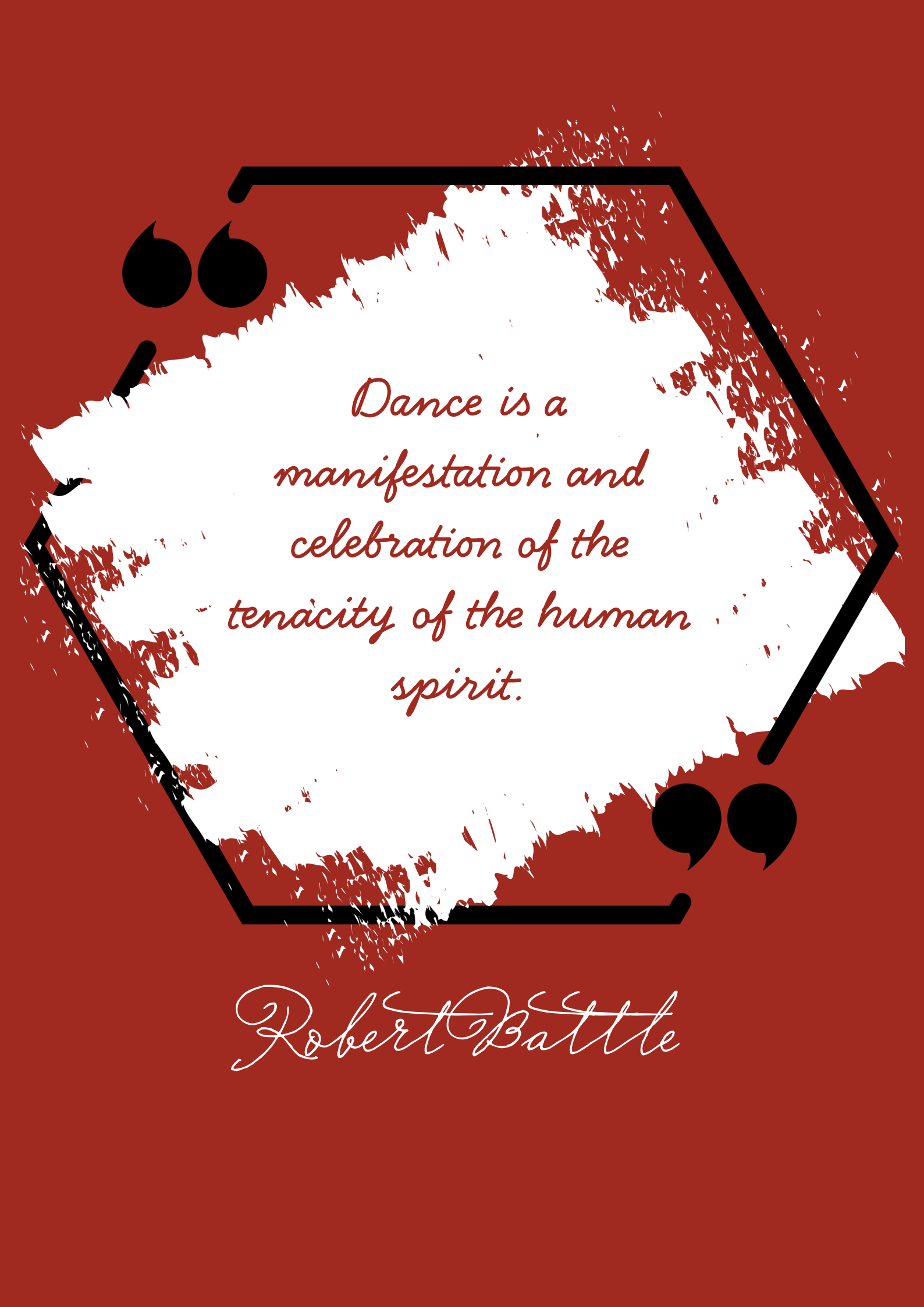
# OUR CURRICULUM



D A N C E

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PHILOSOPHY & NARRATIVE



*Dance is a  
manifestation and  
celebration of the  
tenacity of the human  
spirit.*

*Robert Battle*

# OUR PHILOSOPHY

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Dance is an expression of emotion that words cannot articulate, it is a means of communicating with the self, others, and the environment.

Everyone has the potential to move beautifully, and find enjoyment and understanding through the creative processes of dance; producing thinking dancers, not simply moving bodies.

The roots of Dance are in community and celebration and at the onset of the Renaissance the art form developed an aesthetic purpose through formalised structures of movement and sequence.

Over time Dance has served as an expressive tool, to stimulate conscious understanding of social and political expression through the language of movement.

Dance promotes a culture of integrative thought and action, allowing dancers to take ownership of their learning and creativity; thereby transitioning from a receiver to producer.

# KEY STAGE THREE

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## Year 7

As part of the PE curriculum year 7 will introduce students to subject specific terminology, safe practice in terms of warm up and cool down, and basic principles of technique as well as practical exploration of movement components as established by Laban.

Rudolf Laban was a movement theorist, a choreographer and a dancer who categorized human movement into four component parts as a way of developing a language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting human movement. We begin by introducing students to the concept of the eight dance actions, before we move on to exploring dynamic range, spatial planes and then finally fundamental choreographic devices unison and canon.

Short movement sequences are taught to develop understanding of technique for performance for example the concept of alignment in parallel position of the feet, knees over toes and articulating through the feet heel ball toe in take-off and landing. We learn to execute movement with control and precision by using our core abdominal muscles and fully extending the limbs.

Through choreographic creative tasks our students are encouraged to take risks, with techniques and ideas and learn from mistakes. Finally we learn about skills required for effective performance such as self-discipline and focus and projection, critically appreciating our performances to identify strengths and weaknesses.

## Year 9

In year 9 we review and build on key concepts introduced in year 7. First, we revisit safe practice for a dancer in training looking specifically at warm up and cool down and physiological changes to the body. We also look at injury prevention and the treatment of injuries, principles of training, as well as diet and nutrition.

# KEY STAGE THREE

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Through more complex movement sequences there is a further exploration of principles of contemporary genre and refinement of technique for performance, for example, correct posture with soft ribs and neutral pelvis as well as the concept of clarity and control particularly in the extension of the limbs.

Through the exploration of skills for performance our students learn to demonstrate discipline and enhance their mental skills developing their movement memory in order to perform pieces of greater challenge in terms of length and level of difficulty. To develop knowledge of the process of choreography we look at professional practitioners such as Alvin Ailey, whose productions are acclaimed for their celebration of African American culture. We study 'Stopgap Dance Company,' a global leader of disability access in dance who advocate for the dance industry to become more inclusive to transforms society's perceptions of difference.

Students also study James Cousins who is renowned for presenting dance in different performance environments beyond the traditional stage. We learn to critically appreciate the work of the professionals, developing understanding of a range of approaches when creating using a range of stimuli to generate movement ideas such as visual images, pieces of music as well as the use of props. Through choreographic creative tasks students also review and explore more complex concepts in relation to movement components and subject specific terms for example motif development, formations, pathways, proxemics, shape and size of movement as well action, reaction and lead and follow.

Students are also introduced to the concept of contact work exploring lifts and counter balances. Throughout the year students appreciate the performance skills demonstrated by themselves and their peers to develop a greater understanding of the range of skills necessary for effective performance.

# KEY STAGE FOUR

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In year 10 and 11 students study an anthology of a range of six professional works by established and emerging artists, in a range of styles and style fusions, they also develop understanding of choreographic process and critical appreciation of own performances.

The GCSE Dance Anthology underpins learning across each of the three core areas of performance, choreography and appreciation. The anthology's mix of artistic, cultural and aesthetically diverse works, has been selected to broaden students' knowledge and understanding of the wide range of dance choreographed and performed in the United Kingdom today.

The practical component of the course enables students to study dance by 'doing' and the anthology of professional works provides a springboard for the development of creative and engaging practical tasks. The study of the anthology facilitates the development of students' skills in performance and choreography as well as broadening their knowledge and understanding of dance and ability to critically appraise dances of different styles and cultural influences. We focus on the performance of dance, reflecting choreographic intention to the audience through a range of skills such as physical, technical, mental and expressive skills. Part of this process is the revisiting of training principles and application of that knowledge to develop performance to a high standard.

Students gain further knowledge in terms of choreographing dance, including selecting movement material and aural setting, to communicate choreographic intention. Students create a final piece of choreography which demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performance skills. Throughout the course students critically appreciate their own works and professional works, through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements. They learn to apply their knowledge of movement components to analyse six professional works (Emancipation of Expressionism, Artificial Things, Shadows, Infra, A Linha Curva and Within Her Eyes) specifically looking at how movement components are used by choreographers to communicate an intention to an audience.

Students also look at other constituent features (staging, lighting, costume, music) and their contribution to the choreographic intent.

# KEY STAGE FIVE

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A-level Dance encourages students to develop their creative and intellectual capacity, alongside transferable skills such as team working, communication and problem solving. All of these are sought after skills by higher education and employers and will help them stand out in the workplace whatever their choice of career. A-level Dance requires students to develop, demonstrate and articulate practical and theoretical knowledge, understanding and experience of: technical and performance skills together with the process and art of choreography.

In year 12 and 13 students build on prior knowledge, understanding and skills of performance, choreography and critical appreciation with the study of professional repertoire located within two specific areas of study (Rambert Dance Company and The American Jazz Genre). Areas of study provide students with the opportunity to investigate the key changes in the development of dance linked to a genre and allow students to demonstrate contextual understanding through written communication and performance.

Throughout the course students develop understanding of the historical and socio-cultural context for both areas, as well as study three practitioners within each area. Students look at the key developments within the art form and how these are reflected in each area of study for example the development of modern dance - Martha Graham (rebellion against the confinement of classical restriction), Merce Cunningham (chance compositional methods abstract - movement for movement's sake).

Students demonstrate their knowledge of the choreographic process by create a final piece of group choreography (in response to questions set by the exam board). Students learn how to perform dance through the application of physical, technical, interpretative and performance skills, revisiting training principles and application of that knowledge to develop physical and technical performance skills. The focus is on refinement of performance skills in their own work putting their knowledge into practice. reflecting choreographic intention to the audience through a range of skills such as physical, technical, mental and expressive skills. Part of this process is the revisiting of training principles and application of that knowledge to develop performance to a high standard. We also focus on creating dance applying choreographic skills to communicate artistic intention.

Exploring range of choreographic approaches to generate movement for example contact improvisation/movement with complexity. Students also learn how to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of performance and choreography from different periods and genres. Throughout the course students practically experience technique specific to each practitioner e.g. Bruce - Graham. Alston - Cunningham. The study of professional dance works, within the areas of study, promotes the integration of theory and practice and underpins students' own approaches to performance and choreography. In addition, students develop the skills to be able to critically appreciate and assess performance and choreography through making analytical, interpretative and evaluative judgements.

Students also critically appreciate each practitioner's use of constituent features (movement components, staging, lighting, costume, music) and there contribution to communicating the choreographic intent. We also study each practitioner's contribution to the art form identifying stylistic and characteristic features, as well as each practitioner's impact on the development of the history of dance.



BUILDING ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST  
TO HELP THE CHILDREN OF TODAY  
MEET THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW