

Curriculum Enrichment: Garsington Opera First Workshop 2025

In 2025, our ongoing partnership with Garsington Opera First reached an exciting new level, with pupils taking part in a highly immersive, full-day workshop that placed creativity, collaboration and performance firmly at the centre of learning. This experience stands as a highlight of the year and reflects our commitment to providing ambitious and inspiring arts enrichment for all pupils.

Curriculum Intent

The intent of this enrichment opportunity was to give pupils the chance to experience opera not just as observers, but as creators and performers. In line with Ofsted's emphasis on cultural capital, creativity and personal development, pupils were supported to explore music, drama and movement in an authentic and challenging context.

By working with professional practitioners on Handel's *Rodelinda*, pupils engaged with a significant operatic work while developing confidence, discipline and expressive skill.

Workshop in School

The Garsington Opera First team spent the entire day working closely with the children, guiding them through a creative process that was both demanding and deeply rewarding. Pupils were involved in every stage of producing their own operatic presentation, including:

- Writing and shaping the narrative
- Acting out scenes and developing character
- Composing original music
- Choreographing movement and stage action
- Rehearsing and refining performance

The focus, concentration and creativity in the room were palpable throughout the day. Pupils demonstrated remarkable teamwork and resilience, listening carefully to one another's ideas and working collaboratively to bring their performance together.

Performance and Sharing

A particularly special moment came when pupils had the opportunity to perform their completed operatic presentation to Fox and Hedgehog Class. This sharing of work gave pupils a real sense of pride and purpose, reinforcing the idea that their creative efforts had value and an audience.

Performing to others helped pupils consolidate their learning and develop confidence, communication skills and a sense of achievement.

Impact on Learning and Development

The impact of this workshop was clear and lasting. Pupils:

- Took increasing ownership of their ideas and contributions
- Demonstrated sustained concentration and creative stamina
- Developed confidence in performance and self-expression
- Experienced the satisfaction of creating something ambitious together

Teachers observed pupils pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones and discovering new strengths as performers, composers and collaborators.

Cultural Capital and Personal Development

This experience made a powerful contribution to pupils' cultural capital, offering meaningful access to professional arts practice and challenging perceptions about opera. Working directly with the Garsington Opera First team helped pupils see that opera is a living, collaborative art form, creative, expressive and accessible.

Opportunities such as this enrich pupils' education far beyond the classroom, nurturing confident, creative and culturally aware learners

