

Curriculum Enrichment: Garsington Opera First – Bringing Opera to Life

As part of our commitment to delivering a broad, ambitious and culturally rich curriculum, our Key Stage 2 pupils were fortunate to work with Garsington Opera First, taking part in an inspiring opera project that brought music, storytelling and performance vividly to life.

Curriculum Intent

Our partnership with Garsington Opera First aimed to introduce pupils to opera as a powerful form of storytelling and expression, supporting Ofsted's focus on cultural capital, personal development and access to high-quality arts education. By studying *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky's best-loved opera, pupils explored complex emotions, relationships and narrative through music, drama and performance.

Curriculum Implementation

Garsington Opera came to the school for a full day workshop, transforming the learning experience for the whole of Key Stage 2. Professional opera practitioners worked with pupils to:

- Explain and explore the story of *Eugene Onegin* in an engaging and age-appropriate way
- Get all pupils singing, acting and interpreting the opera
- Develop understanding of character, emotion and storytelling through music
- Give pupils insight into how opera is created and performed

The children threw themselves into the experience, and it was a joy to see KS2 completely immersed in singing and drama throughout the day. The energy and enthusiasm were infectious, with pupils supporting one another and developing confidence in performance.

A special mention must go to the children who performed solo singing roles - Lily L, Malaki, Max F and Florence - who truly blew us all away with their confidence and musicality. Equally, recognition goes to the pupils who acted so beautifully and brought the story to life through drama: Malaki, Emmie, Elizabeth, Harmony, Toby, Russell, Felix, George, Edmund, Tisharna, Olivia and Rennie.

It was a privilege to work alongside Garsington Opera, and following the workshop the children were simply buzzing with excitement, eager to continue their learning and experience the opera in performance.

Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom

As a culmination of the project, pupils were invited to attend a live performance of *Eugene Onegin* at Garsington Opera at Wormsley. This provided a rare and memorable opportunity to see the opera they had studied performed in a professional setting.

The evening was a truly special experience. Pupils shared a picnic together on the beautiful Wormsley estate before watching the performance, creating a sense of occasion and community. Seeing the opera live deepened pupils' understanding of the music and story, reinforcing learning from the workshop and allowing them to appreciate the scale, skill and collaboration involved in opera production.

Impact and Personal Development

The impact of this enrichment opportunity was significant. Pupils:

- Developed confidence through singing and performing
- Gained a deeper understanding of music as storytelling
- Built resilience, teamwork and self-belief
- Experienced live performance in a prestigious cultural setting

For many pupils, this was their first experience of opera, helping to remove barriers and challenge perceptions about classical music.

Cultural Capital

This project made a strong contribution to pupils' cultural capital, ensuring that all learners had access to enriching artistic experiences, regardless of background. Opportunities like this help pupils develop curiosity, aspiration and an appreciation of the arts that will remain with them long beyond primary school.

