



Welcome to our newsletter February 2026

Curriculum – Focus on performing arts

The Performing Arts Department are thrilled to be teaching such a dedicated and passionate cohort of sixth form students this academic year, students who not only commit to their KS5 studies with intended effort but also engage and lead within the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that Performing Arts at Lord Lawson offer. This academic year our sixth form students have experienced opening nights, standing ovations, high achieving assessment grades, regional performances and professional industry workshops.



What are our performing arts students studying this term in dance?

Year 12 A Level Dance students are currently studying their Component Two: Critical Engagement compulsory professional work Rooster, Christopher Bruce (1991). Within this work we are exploring the aural setting of The Rolling Stones back catalogue which the work is set to and analysing the themes of 1960's nostalgia and popular culture starting points of the work. This focus continues to develop our understanding of Rambert Dance Company and other Rambert Choreographers Robert North and Richard Alston.

Previously this year we have completed work on our optional area of study, American Jazz Dance allowing us the privilege to study American Movie Musicals created by practitioners Gene Kelly, Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse, such as; Singin' in the Rain, American in Paris, West Side Story, Fiddle on the Roof, Sweet Charity, On The Town and Fancy Free.

We had a fantastic launch to A Level Dance in the Autumn term when we staged our Academy Production, Singin' in the Rain Junior. Singin' in the Rain is our A Level optional area set work. This opportunity allowed A Level Dance students to study the musical in more depth by assisting with the choreography for all musical numbers. This was an amazing experience, and I was so proud of the contribution both on and off stage made by the A Level Dance team which raised the quality and authenticity of our Singin' in the Rain production.

What are our performing arts students studying this term in drama?



Across year 12 and 13, we have been exploring our Component Three practical work recently, with year 12 producing a performance of *Stolen Secrets* by Fin Kennedy, which utilises elements of naturalism, ensemble work, and physical theatre. The class have been creatively challenged looking at a completely new style of performance, which has been really exciting. This is the first of three plays they will spend time workshopping and developing, the third of which they will perform for a visiting examiner next academic year. Excitingly, this is where our current year 13 students find themselves, rehearsing *Hansel and Gretel* by Carl Grose. They have applied the style of Kneehigh Theatre Company to their performance and are preparing for the visiting examiner to arrive within the next few weeks. Both classes have enjoyed the challenge of staging their own versions of these performances, spending some of their ILC time finding appropriate music or developing ideas to share in the classroom. The Drama Studio has been busy and productive, just as it should be. An extra busy half term for year 13 who are also developing their coursework, which is a reflection on the rehearsal process of their devised piece, *Cleaners*, in the style of John Godber, as well as revising for their written exam in May.



BTEC National Level 3 Music Performance

This term Year 13 have been focusing on Unit 3 Ensemble Music. Musicians rarely work in isolation and the ability to perform as part of an ensemble is an essential skill for any musician, regardless of the genre or style of music they enjoy playing and regardless with the musicians you are working with. As a musician, whether you are part of a pop group or an orchestra, the skills of teamwork and communication are vital. Before Christmas the Year 12 and Year 13 Music students collaborated together to create a unique arrangement of Wham's Last Christmas for the first time. Now, in preparation for the formal assessment of this unit, our Sixth Form students have continued to work together as part of a musical group and have been further developing their ensemble skills working with Mrs Hall, Mr Wright our visiting guitar tutor as well as working independently. They have been taking part and leading in rehearsals and directing the shape of the music. As an ensemble, they have been given a list of songs and they have selected three which they are now reimagining in a unique and creative way. They have learned them in the original style and are adapting them to create a brand new interpretation of the pieces. They are working towards a final performance date when they will share their set list with an audience on the morning of May 12 2026 in the Drama Studio.



Academy Production 2025 *Singin' in the Rain Junior*

Our sixth form students continue to contribute hugely to Lord Lawson's Academy Productions performing as leading character and ensemble roles. In October we staged *Singin' in the Rain Junior* to huge success. Year 12 students Grace and Toby had their first experience of leading roles of Lina Lamont and Cosmo Brown. For our Year 13 students Jeannie, Marla, Luke and Tom this was their last Lord Lawson Academy Production, for Jeannie and Marla their last after an incredible 7 years of commitment. The experienced contribution of sixth form to production preparation is invaluable as they lead the process, setting examples of professionalism and high-quality theatre craft to the whole cast. Throughout the whole *Singin' in the Rain Junior* process our sixth form cast were impeccable role models to our younger students.



Academy Production 2026 *Billy Elliot The Musical* Cast Announcement

Over the past half term members of Performers have participated in a rigorous and challenging audition process for our Academy Production *Billy Elliot The Musical*. All students involved greatly impressed us with their dedication, preparation and enthusiasm. There were some difficult decisions to make however, by the end of the audition process the selected students had really become the characters they have been selected to portray, sharing understanding and attention to detail in their performances.

Congratulations to all students who have been cast in leading roles (which includes sixth form Performers as highlighted below) the whole *Billy Elliot* cast are proud of you and the Performing Arts department have every confidence that you will lead this production with maturity and heart.

Billy Elliot The Musical will be performed from Tuesday 13 - Friday 16 October 2026.

Tickets will go on sale in September, and more detailed information will be shared throughout the rehearsal process.

Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy proudly presents... *Billy Elliot The Musical* Leading Cast

Billy - Sam Richardson

Mrs Wilkinson - Grace Clelland

Jackie Elliot- Toby Cowan -
Pickard

Tony Elliot - Tom Lane

Grandma - Hope Crozier

Michael - Bobby Mycock

Mum - Scarlett Malone

Mrs Braithwaite - Macie Ridgley

Kevin / Posh Boy - Finn Charlton

Leading Miners and Wives - Lyla

Bloomfield- Reece, Ava Walsh,

Louie Huntley and Zack Nicholson

Boxing Club - Marley Bage,

Lawerence Steel, Joel Stevenson

and Zain Hussain



KS3 student support and collaboration

In Performing Arts, we offer our KS5 students the opportunity to support KS3 Performing Arts lessons. Year 12 students Grace and Macie have volunteered to each support Year 7 classes attending two lessons per fortnight. Grace and Macie have shown great responsibility within this commitment supporting demonstrations, leading warmups and selecting a star student to praise in each lesson.

Year 12 Drama students have supported KS3 lessons by volunteering their own time to perform recorded examples of scripted and devised scenes to provide high quality student led examples to Year 7 and Year 8.

Year 12 Dance students have volunteered their own time to choreograph a piece, 'People Watching', for the Gateshead Schools Dance Festival (Tuesday 25th March) and to collaborate with Year 9 Dance Leaders, incorporating 21 other dancers within their choreography.



Extra-Curricular Sixth Form Opportunities

Dance Leaders – Tuesday 3.20pm- 4.20pm

Drama Club – Thursday Lunchtime

Vocalise - Tuesday Lunchtime

Musicians - Thursday and Friday Lunchtime



Upcoming Sixth Form Performing Arts Events

Blood Brothers, Sunderland Empire Educational Visit- Tuesday 17th March

Gateshead Schools Dance Festival- Wednesday 25th March

This is Rambert, Theatre Royal Educational Visit- Tuesday 16th June

London West End Theatre Educational Visit – Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th July

Billy Elliot The Musical- Tuesday 13th- Friday 16th October

Singin in the snow Christmas talent showcase 2025



For further information about sixth form Performing Arts opportunities please contact Miss Brown, Subject Leader via email at sbrown@lordlawson.academy

Thank you

We would like to thank all of our Performing Arts sixth form students for supporting the Performing Arts department in all whole school events. We greatly appreciate your efforts and enthusiasm to make Performing Arts a warm, inclusive and positive space. We look forward to the rest of the academic year and supporting you as you continue to grow as inspirational young people and performers.

Personal Development in the sixth form

This half-term, Year 12 focused on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We were delighted to welcome Ben Oliver, founder of Worth Educating, who delivered a series of interactive, activity-based workshops aligned with the statutory RSHE guidelines.

Students explored a range of important topics, including:

- **Healthy relationships and consent**
- **Pornography and image sharing**
- **Masculinity and misogyny**
- **Sexual harassment**
- **Social media literacy and online safety**

You can find out more about Worth Educating here: <https://www.wortheducating.org>

Year 13 have experienced a varied and purposeful PD programme this half-term. In response to student voice, and with A Level examinations fast approaching, we have built in dedicated sessions on revision skills and effective study strategies.

We were also pleased to welcome Tyne and Wear Fire Service, who delivered their Pre-Driver Safety Workshops to all Year 13 tutor groups. Students gained essential road-safety knowledge, including how to be a responsible passenger, manage risks, and handle peer pressure.

Following the UCAS deadline, we additionally hosted Harry from Northumbria University for a session on confirming university choices and understanding the clearing process. This support has helped our university-bound students feel confident and informed as they take their next steps.

2026 Ski trip to Austria

This year's ski trip was an amazing experience. Each day was action packed with skiing being the focus and a range of evening activities including swimming, tubing and quizzes. Whether you're already experienced in skiing or completely new, all ability levels were catered for. Students were placed in groups with their own ski instructor who worked with them each day heading down different slopes and doing different exercises to build skills. During the day we had 5 hours skiing, 3 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. Skiing was fun and exciting as you could challenge yourself to ski down different slopes and enjoy the beautiful scenery whilst taking the gondolas and ski lifts with friends.

On an evening, we enjoyed free time before the evening meal which enabled us to catch up with friends. The food provided for the evening meals was delicious, a great experience tasting local Austrian dishes. Each evening after our evening meal was different and an opportunity to try new things like the tubing and snow roller coaster. As a sixth form student, I gained extra privileges with bonus free time which meant we could visit the local shop on an evening to purchase those much-requested holiday souvenirs. We then whiled away our free time free in the gym, in the disco room or just sit with friends before going to sleep ready for the next day of adventures.

The trip enabled us to develop our leadership skills by helping members of staff with different things and supporting younger students from the lower school. The ski trip is a fantastic opportunity for anyone, you are able to gain skiing skills and also enjoy your time with friends. Thank you to all the staff who planned and accompanied us on the trip and helped make it such a magical experience.

