



INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS 2010

Dear Headteacher,

The Helen O'Grady Drama Academy has been operating in 25 countries for over 30 years and is also available in the UK to every child from the age of 5 to 17. We have also recently introduced classes for pre-school children and for adults.

Findings which emerged from the Bercow Review of Services for Children and Young People (2008) claim youngsters starting Primary School are often unable to string a sentence together or to understand simple instructions.

As you know, following the Bercow Report, a Communications Champion has been appointed and is in the process of planning, organising and, later, leading a National Year in 2011 focusing on the importance of developing children's communication skills.

Our Academy offers a unique programme, which aims to improve children's confidence, self esteem and, vitally, skill in verbal communication. Principals of the Academy already work with schools around the UK, offering workshops, after school activities and specially tailored classes during the school day.

We believe success later in life is often dependent on our experiences as a child. Developing sound communication skills in the early years, where we are able to put our case forward in an ever demanding environment, is paramount to unlocking the world in which we live. Releasing a child's creative and expressive potential through drama is a key to healthy growth. By building confidence and self esteem, the curriculum of the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy allows each and every child to fulfil their potential, developing verbal communication skills in a fun filled environment.

We have enclosed here some information which you may find interesting and some suggestions of ways which we could work together to help children everywhere become confident, articulate speakers and well adjusted, sociable human beings.

I hope you and your teachers will find the literature in this folder helpful. I will contact you in a few days to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

Kind regards,

We just wanted to say a big thank you to you and your team for all you have done for Stephen over the past two years. We have noticed such a change in him – so much more confident. He is going to a performing arts college in Bath in September and thinking he may want to join a Youth Theatre next year, so please keep us on your mailing list.

A & M C (Parents)

The Princess Royal has asked me to thank you for your recent letter concerning the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy in Cheltenham. Her Royal Highness was pleased to read of your work in developing children's self-confidence and communication skills through drama, not least those with special educational needs.

The Princess congratulates you on your work and sends you her best wishes for the continued success of your important contribution.

Nick Wright
Private Secretary to
HRH The Princess Royal

Students Having Fun!



To all the pupils and staff of the Academy

I have recently received a letter from your Principal [in South Manchester] who told me about your Academy. It is always good to hear about clubs and groups and it never ceases to amaze me the enthusiasm and dedication everyone gives

.....Drama is a great way of expressing ones self and can have so many positive aspects in people's lives.

May I take this opportunity of wishing everyone connected with the Academy the best of luck for the future and on a personal note, thank you for all your support of our club.

*Yours sincerely,
Sir Alex Ferguson CBE
Manager*

What students say about us.

I look forward to Saturdays as it gets closer to 10am. At 10, I go to drama where I can pretend to be anything. I can forget all my worries as I walk through the door, for my teacher is waiting to welcome me into the hall. I can be a bat, a cat or a rat and no-one cares. It's made me more confident and I don't care if people stare. So thank you for making it fun. I would recommend drama to everyone!

Emma, age 8

I like drama. I like it a lot. It's more fun than swinging a bat or playing touch. We do lots and lots of exciting things. It teaches me how to speak and act and it's fun, fun, fun. I like it like that!

Saffron, age 8

Drama is good, it's very, very good, because we act and play. We act and play at many things like lions and kings and a dancer on strings.

Amy, age 6

This was a poem, submitted for a competition in class by a Youth Theatre student who chose not to sign the work.

*Drama has helped me through all this time,
To make me feel like I have a right.
A right to feel good about myself,
To be confident, happy and glad of my life.
When I act I forget all my troubles,
I am somebody else, I don't think at all,
Nothing matters, I don't care any more.
I'm doing something I am good at,
In front of everyone else.
Then, I watch, I learn from them,
We work together, we are a team.
I laugh and I smile.
That's the real me/
That's the person Drama helped me to be.*

Anon

What We Can Offer Your School.

Free One-off Workshops

Today, in many parts of the world, the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy offers exciting workshops in Primary Schools, during school hours.

These free workshops are designed to introduce our programme to you and the children in your school. All we ask is you allow us to distribute letters for the children to take home for their parents explaining what we do and where their local classes are.

We will visit your school and conduct the workshops, which last approximately one hour each and include the following aspects of our unique curriculum:

- Introductory Warm-Up Activities
- Speech Exercises
- Dance/Drama
- Creative Improvised Drama
- Snippets (Pair Work)

These can be arranged for a mutually convenient time.

It is quite possible we already have children from your school attending our classes. Feedback from teachers is always very positive. Some of the benefits to children in our programme are:

- Increase in confidence
- More likely to volunteer information in class
- Use of appropriate eye contact
- Reading and speaking with more expression

Added to this of course is the fun children have in classes and the new friendships formed and you can see how we build up vital life skills in young people.

Thank you for all your efforts with Paul. I think it seems to have paid off already - last week he was called up in assembly to receive a certificate for good writing. Instead of just accepting the certificate, he snatched his story from the head teacher and announced he was going to read it to the school - which he proceeded to do with great confidence!

A.C. (Parent)

What We Can Offer Your School.

Exclusive Classes

After seeing our workshop lessons and reading more about the benefits of our programme, you may decide our own aims fit in with those of your school and wish to host classes especially for your pupils. This is already happening successfully in many areas around the country.

Classes could be after school, at lunchtime or integrated into your school day and we would follow our regular curriculum for twelve weeks of each school term. Lessons are made up of the components you will have seen in our free workshop lesson using a progressive curriculum which is updated regularly to ensure it continues to interest and stimulate the children.

All staff employed by the Academy are experienced teachers and all are, naturally, CRB checked. They all have specialist – and ongoing – training in the Helen O’Grady System.

We are happy to offer these classes to your children at a reduced rate which we will discuss with you should you decide to take this route.

James was being severely bullied at school and, as a result, suffered very low self-esteem and was almost developing a persecution complex. Since he has been attending your group his confidence has grown considerably and he is no longer a target for bullies due to his shyness and sensitivity. The teachers also report they have noticed a great change to both attitude and behaviour, but also in his actual school work. I really, obviously want to continue with your good work and value the positive results you have achieved.

S.B. (Parent)

What We Can Offer Your School.

Specialist Cover For PPA Time

We understand, since 2005, the government requires all schools to release their teachers on a regular basis for planning, preparation and assessment time. The Helen O'Grady Drama Academy is able to offer a programme of study, delivered by a qualified and experienced teacher over a period of time. Our unique curriculum is structured to improve children's confidence and verbal communication, through exciting drama lessons.

We will attend your school on a weekly basis to teach one or more classes throughout the term. A series of ten or more lessons can culminate in a short presentation for the school and/or parents.

There are different lessons for infant and junior children – Lower Primary for children 5 to 8 years (Y1-Y3), and Upper Primary for children 9 to 11 years (Y4-Y6). With a four year cycle, children can join the Academy at 5 years old and leave at 17, without ever repeating a lesson.

Benefits from our programme are outlined earlier in this document. Over a term we can see real progress with our students, over a year the development can be phenomenal. Feedback from parents and teachers is always very positive.

All classes are high energy and great fun!

We would be happy to show you our curriculum and discuss the possibilities further and how we could meet your PPA time requirements.

How can I begin to thank you? I am so proud of Samantha's achievements over the last five years. It was lovely to see how confident she looked on stage this week – she really had a stage presence and spoke so clearly. She has grown in confidence, enjoys performing and will talk to people easily.

.....Although it's all goodbyes at the moment she has an exciting time ahead of her which she will be better equipped to deal with thanks to your teaching.....

N (Parent)