

Celebration of St Elphin's 150th anniversary

Prize winning students

ST Elphin's pupils gained tremendous success recently following their speech and drama exams. Several pupils have since gained the London Academy Gold Medal - which is usually only achieved by full-time drama students.

Lower sixth students have earned Silver medals and last year, seven year 11 students achieved Bronze. Many girls enjoy taking part in Buxton and Derby Festivals where they can show their skills in poetry and prose speaking, acting, mime, sight-reading and Bible reading. The school regularly wins many first prizes.

St Elphin's drama department is not all about competitive success however, it's about taking part, learning to work as part of a team, coping with problems and building confidence.

The 'A' level Theatre Studies students have to write, rehearse and stage their own productions. Concerns about the environment, social inequality and growing up have been explored.

The 'Innocent' was devised in support of Amnesty International; 'On the Brink' was an Anti-Nuclear war parable; and this year's play is about abortion and fertility.

Early start for drama department

LIFE in the drama department begins early. In the nursery, pupils begin with action rhymes, poetry and mime.

Infants enjoy performing in nativity plays and harvest festivals and junior school girls have their own productions, including characters from pantomime and fairy tales as well as scenes from 'Grease' and rap routines.

Senior school productions range from the classical to the very modern, from large-scale musicals to intimate affairs.

The uproarious pastiche 'Daisy Pulls it Off' was followed by a full-scale musical, 'Annie' and last summer, an earthy comedy by Victoria Wood shared the bill with the more traditional but spectacular 'Joseph and his amazing technicoloured dreamcoat'.

The department has links with a Sheffield theatrical agent and when pupils auditioned for a part in the film 'The Babysitter' Laura Caryll was chosen for a role.

Another pupil, Amy Barnes, recently joined the cast of 'Oliver' at The Crucible.

AUDITIONS

Girls are prepared for professional auditions, in particular with the National Youth and National Youth Music-theatres and several girls have been accepted as full and part-time members.

Work experience at Derby Playhouse and Buxton Opera House is available for those planning a career in the theatre and regular workshops are held at the school to enable pupils to develop their skills.

Music Department hits the high notes

ST ELPHIN'S has a lively, busy and thriving music department. It is housed in a newly refurbished block which, as well as having two classrooms has some 14 individual teaching and practice rooms.

GCSE and 'A' level music is available and results in recent years have been excellent. The department is staffed by a full-time director, an assistant and 12 visiting teachers who cover the whole range of musical instruments.

Lessons take place during school hours but do not interfere with the academic timetable.

As well as its orchestra and instrumental group work, St Elphin's is particularly proud of its choral tradition, with choirs regularly taking part in festivals and competitions.

In the past few years the senior choir has sung in York Minster and Westminster Abbey as well as performing in the 'Noye's Fludde', 'Annie' and 'Joseph and his amazing technicolour dreamcoat'.

The school has a large hall and a full size Bosendorfer Grand piano, which enables the school support an external concert programme.

Recent events have included an evening with Richard Stille and Peter Skellern and a recital by Peter Keer from the English National Opera.

The latest musical evening took place just this week, when as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations, a special 'come and sing' performance of Handel's 'Messiah' was given in the school chapel.



ST Elphin's 150th anniversary year was celebrated by a special 'Service of Praise' at Derby Cathedral at the beginning of the year.

Stephen Yeo (right), the school's director of music is pictured with Betty Roe, the composer of music to 'Nisi Dominus Frustra,' and several St Elphin's pupils.



PROUD St Elphin's pupils collected their cups for outstanding exam results at the school's annual speech day.

Pictured with head girl Karen Smyth, the 16-year-old achievers received as many as nine grade As in their exams.

The traditional church service at Chesterfield was absent from this year's speech day, making way for a special anniversary service to mark the school's 150th year at Derby Cathedral in January.

A presentation ceremony for two long-serving retiring

governors, Canon Lawton and Mr Hopkins was attended by the school's 'special visitor', the Duchess of Devonshire.

The evening's guest of honour was the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Colonel Sir Peter Hilton.

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