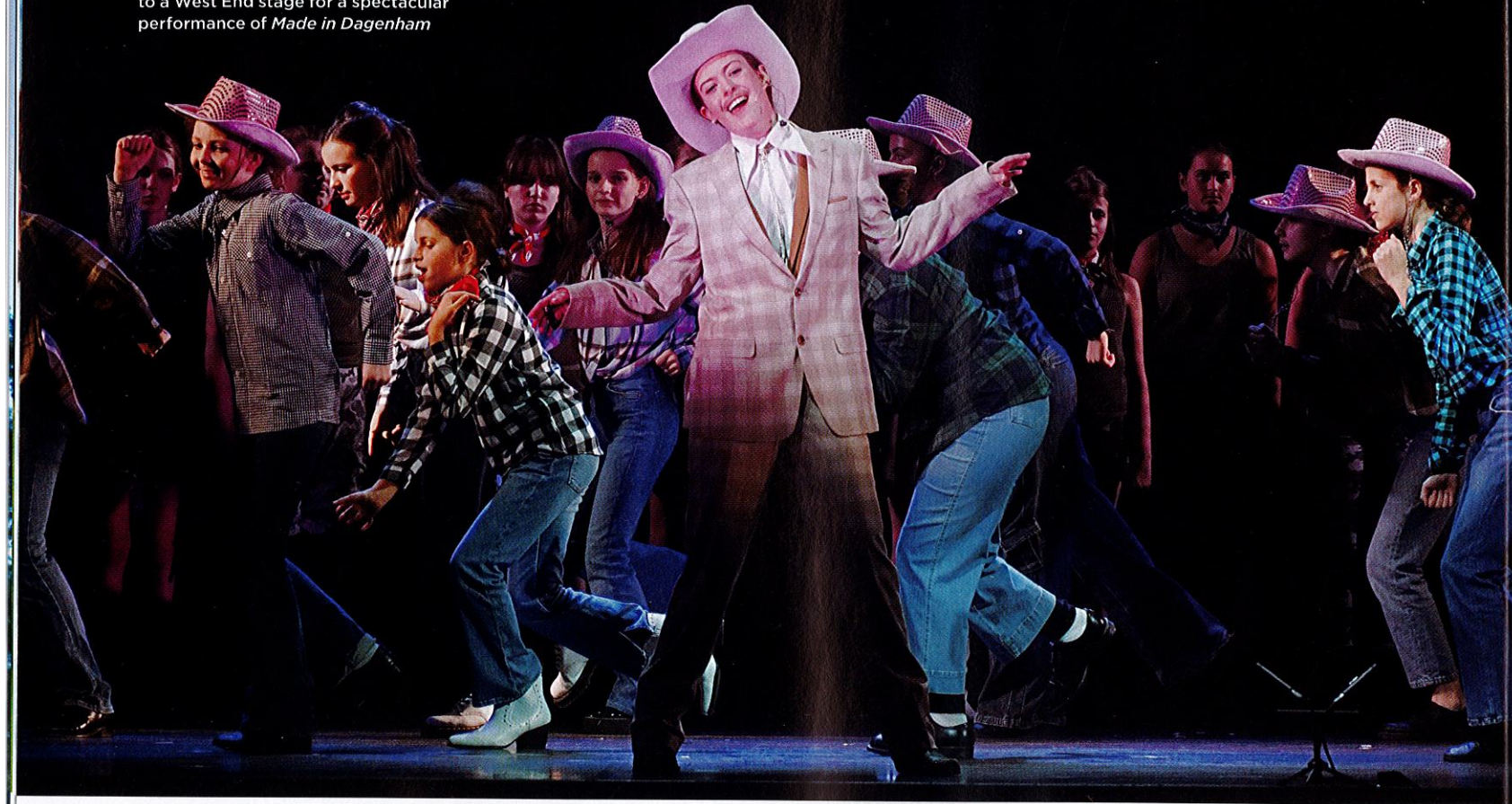


At the start of this year, Francis Holland Sloane Square's drama enthusiasts took to a West End stage for a spectacular performance of *Made in Dagenham*

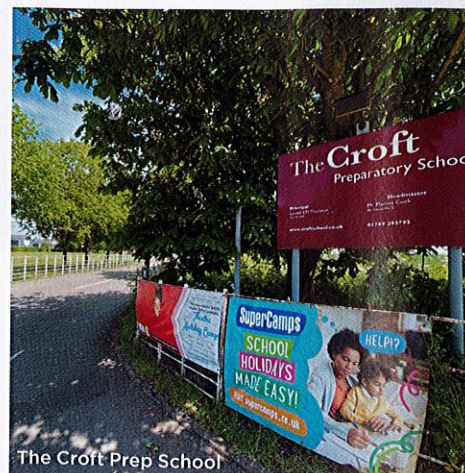


EXTRA EXTRA EXTRACURRICULAR!

Sara Barrett, Head of Drama at The Croft Preparatory School in Stratford-Upon-Avon, shares her excitement about the enriching and creative clubs and activities returning to the school schedule

At long last, extracurricular clubs and activities are back in real life – and with great gusto! During both lockdowns, independent schools went above and beyond to ensure pupils kept up with their studies and extracurricular activities: they rose to the occasion ensuring that there was not one aspect of school life that wasn't reinvented or repurposed for online consumption in order to keep children motivated in the absence of actual resources.

Typically furnished with first-rate sporting facilities and inspiring subject specialists, independent schools are expertly positioned to



nurture the potential in every child. Whether these clubs or activities happen before the start of school, during break, lunchtime or after school, they all have the same goal: enriching the individual.

Nurturing creativity is now more important than ever. After months of online learning, screen-gazing and being separated in bubbles, young people are craving connection and human contact. At least, that's what we think they're craving. As they peek out from behind their screens, there lies uncertainty. Am I still able to connect with others? Can I still communicate with confidence? Is there still a place for me in the world I left behind?

The Croft Preparatory School encourages creativity and self-expression in its pupils



The school's beautiful setting offers children space to learn and grow

The Sleep of Reason Begets Monsters

A confidence boost

It's for this reason that the extracurricular provision within schools is now more relevant than ever. Children need to return to the vibrant worlds they knew. They need reassurance that they do still matter; that the skills and talents that exist inside them are precious; that there's still a place for them here in our new world.

That's why extracurricular opportunities are now more popular than they were. They provide a much-needed opportunity for young people to harness their own talent and build confidence in their ideas and skills. The initial stimulant for this engagement can come in many forms: art, drama, music, dance, sport (in all its many forms), public speaking, debate, creative writing, ecology...if it involves the creation and development of original ideas and skills, it's welcome and well-worth pursuing.

Dream teams

It's undeniable that academic achievement is still a priority within our schools. We aim to deliver education of the highest academic standard and nurture children that are knowledgeable, conversant and well-informed in a range of subject areas. However, in order to equip our young people with the skills they need in the wider world beyond school,

creativity, team work and curiosity are paramount. Extracurricular clubs are a chance for children to learn more about themselves and to take on new challenges. This growth-mindset is a hugely desirable quality for future employers who are looking for the individual behind the academic success. Is this person able to communicate? Are they a team player? What gives them pleasure and strength? It's

through the acquisition and application of skills that children gain confidence, and bonds with others. Away from the classroom children have the freedom to pursue interests that may grow into hobbies and life skills. At The Croft Preparatory School, self-expression and creativity are encouraged every stage of our pupils' development; our beautiful setting provides them with

IT'S THROUGH THE ACQUISITION AND APPLICATION *of skills that children gain confidence and forge bonds with others.* **AWAY FROM THE CLASSROOM, CHILDREN HAVE THE FREEDOM TO PURSUE INTERESTS**



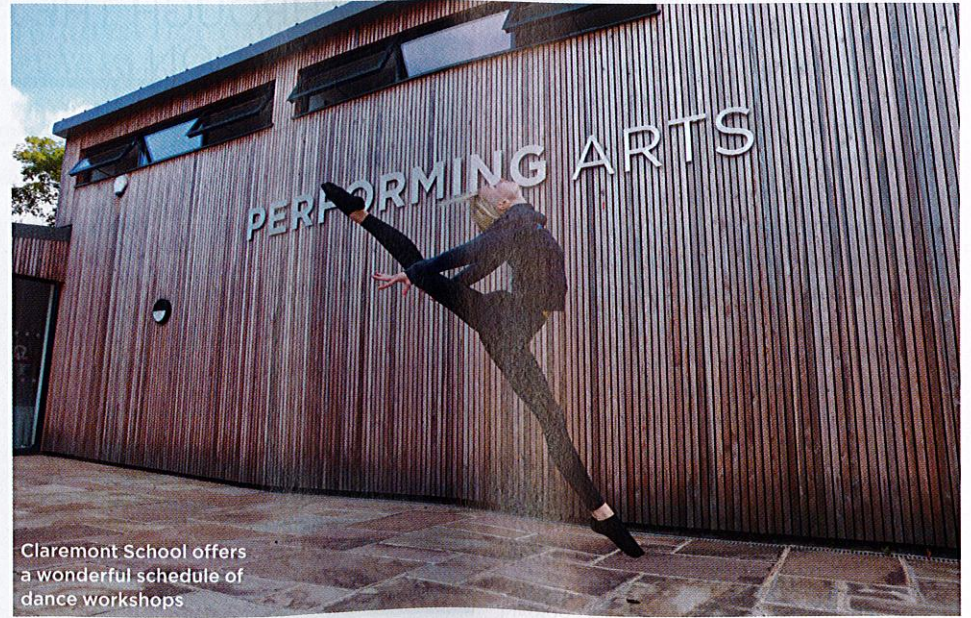
Extracurricular activities such as drama are brilliant for building confidence and encouraging teamwork

Claremont School put on an impressive production of *Madama Butterfly* and *Dolls* at the Adelphi Theatre in 2021



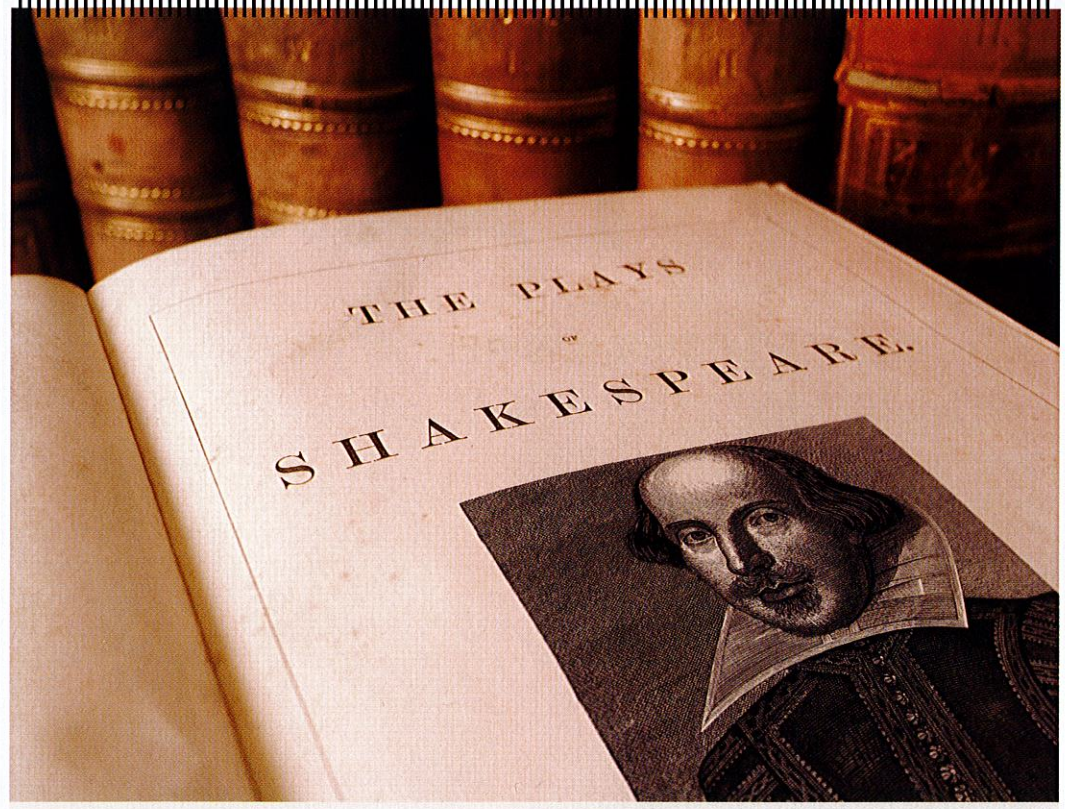
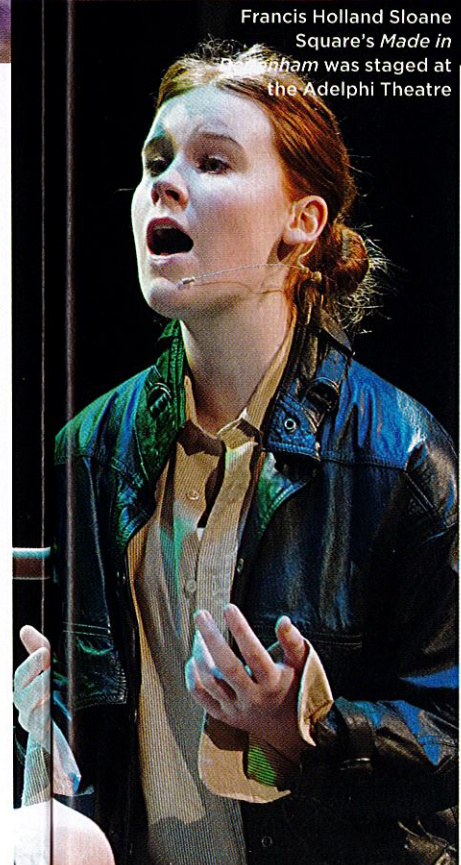
EXTRACURRICULAR CLUBS ARE A CHANCE *for children to learn more about themselves* AND TO TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES

... explore, and play. The scope of the facilities enable a wide range of activities and opportunities – sporting, and recreational – from the sports swimming pool and games pitches to music practice rooms and performance from the small playground arenas to 100-seat theatre; the Croft Cabin and recreation area; to the imitation Motte-castle, Geology Museum and Train. The opportunities are endless at The Croft and the children make the most of them. Spending time in our custom-built train with our Hornby O Gauge clockwork and locomotives is a liberating experience; one that fosters positive wellbeing and encourages teamwork. What better place to be on any Friday than aboard the Thornton with your friends by your side? 🚂



Claremont School offers a wonderful schedule of dance workshops

Francis Holland Sloane Square's *Made in England* was staged at the Adelphi Theatre



THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY AT THE CROFT

At The Croft, we're lucky enough to have the Royal Shakespeare Theatre right on our doorstep. Children frequently visit the theatre with their parents and are captivated by the magic and wonder that is conjured on to the stage. They're carried to other worlds by resplendent costumes and mesmerised by poetry delivery. We decided to build on this enthusiasm by inviting the RSC into our own purpose-built theatre to bring Shakespeare's words to life for our young people. Every child in year three was treated to a workshop based around *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which they played with lines of text, created their own version of well-known characters, experimented with iambic pentameter and explored key themes within the play. How does Helena feel when her kind words towards Demetrius are rejected? How does Hermia feel being dominated by her oppressive father, Egeus? They were able to explore big themes in the safety of a familiar space with actors and practitioners from the RSC ensemble. These professionals shared their own wisdom about the characters; questions they'd pondered while performing the role themselves and

collectively found some answers with our troupe of eager performers.

The following day, year four explored *Romeo and Juliet* with the RSC. Again, the work created was current, thoughtful and vibrant. Was Juliet submissive in their first meeting? How does it feel to be involved in this 'ancient grudge?' Such a diversity of group dynamics resulted in ideas with depth, sincerity and an abundance of fun. Once students knew that there were no wrong answers and that the seed of an idea would be valued, they were away.

These RSC workshops will now form part of our Arts Award Showcase Evening to parents. This will be one of our first live events since Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. Children are proud to share their creativity with people who love them, and in turn, the audience is warmed by that pride. This is why we believe that now, more than ever, extracurricular activities have a vital part to play in the growth of our young people.



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