

Durrington achieve 3rd place in the Southern Premier Division Final and are headed to the Nationals!

We are so proud of our staff and students who spent last Saturday (29th April) preparing and performing 'Angel of Prisons' for the Southern Premier Division Final at Portsmouth Guildhall. Not least for achieving third place which means another chance to perform and compete in the National Final.

The students were phenomenal from the moment they left on the coach at 7.30am to returning back to school at 11.30pm. They were thoughtful, inspiring and supportive of one another, an absolute credit to the school.

The day was spent in a flurry of production meetings, watching the other schools rehearse, rehearsing themselves, watching teacher dance offs (!) and getting ready for the final performance. Mrs Isham had to take part in a musical chairs type of game where she danced around on stage until the music stopped and then rushed to pick up a sponge! This sponge was very important as it determined where we would be placed in the show run. Mrs Isham picked up sponge number 9, the penultimate slot and so there was a long and nervous wait until finally it was our turn to take to the stage around 9pm. Before the performance, year 11 cast member Eden Pailthorpe-Peart gave a rousing and heartfelt pep talk to the whole cast (a task often given to a teacher), setting them up for a fantastic performance.

And what a performance it was, proving what stars they are, they all gave 100% and the piece was performed the best it could be, moving some of the audience to tears and wowing everyone. We were particularly proud to be the only school performing with a range of students from years 7 through to 11. With no audition process for Rock Challenge the piece is wholly inclusive as all are welcome to participate.

Once the performance was complete the students were exhausted but delighted and full of adrenaline. It was then a short wait for the result, as some core cast members made their way to the stage and the rest of the team waited back stage with a live link up.

Before the top 5 places were announced, certificates of excellence were awarded to schools that had scored 9 or 10 in any of the areas marked by the judges. Durrington excelled themselves, claiming 9 out of the 12 available

- **Stage Use**
- **Entertainment**
- **Drama**
- **Soundtrack**
- **Choreography**
- **Concept**
- **Set design and function**
- **Performance skill**
- **Costuming character (one of only 2 schools to receive this).**

Delighted with these results the team were anxiously awaiting the top 5, knowing a top 3 finish would mean the chance to perform again at the National final (which are

only held once every 3 years). Fifth and Fourth places were announced and the tension mounted as Ian Readhead stepped forward to announce third place. When Durrington High School was read out the students on stage, back stage and teachers in the audience screamed with excitement and joy at what they had achieved. (You can check out our Facebook page for the video footage of this)!

It is such a fantastic opportunity for the students to build confidence and have the chance to explore their creative talents. We are very grateful to the fantastic team of staff that work on this project for making it possible. The team, led by the dedicated and never ending enthusiasm of Mrs Isham and the creative vision of Ms Graney, comprises of Mrs House, Mrs Bowden, Miss Hughes, Miss Hodnett, Miss Wolstenholme, Mrs Chaitow, Mrs Wallis-Taylor, Miss Freeman, Miss Hewett, Mr Morley and Mrs Savage.

So now, it is more rehearsals as the 100 strong cast and crew head up North to the Magna Centre, Rotherham for the National Final on Saturday 14th July. Watch this space for the lead up to the finals!

