

## Millom School

### KS4 and 5 Media Rationale:

*What is the importance of the subject? Why should students be studying it? Why should they care about it? How might the subject link to real world scenarios?*

All mass media content, from news, film and TV, through to advertising, radio, video games and social media, is about the stories we tell about ourselves as a society and as individuals. We need to understand who is producing it, how it is produced, what it is saying and what effect it is having?

Today, more than at any time since the invention of the first truly mass communication technology in the early 20th century, media is having a profound effect on our social, political and economic lives. As a result, media studies frequently takes an interdisciplinary approach to its enquiry, embracing politics, economics and psychology, as well as law and ethics. While some may see this as a flaw, in our frantically interconnected world, perhaps it should be acknowledged as another strength. The very fact that many other subjects now embrace media in their own enquiry attests to the growing significance.

It is time to take the subject seriously; Media is the **only** subject that moves with the times and the generations studying it. It requires academic approaches that historically academic subjects do not – the study of theories and analyses that traditional subjects do not. There is an expectation that students of Media are able to apply their theoretical knowledge to everyday, 21<sup>st</sup> century texts and scenarios – things they are actually living through now - something most other subjects lack.

Media academics are also increasingly working with government, regulators and institutions as they critically engage with the new digital age and its fallout. Likewise, the creative industries continue to be the fastest-growing part of the UK economy, accounting for one in 11 jobs, further supporting to the need to study the impact of media and to build a workforce with the skills to support it – something some current generations of workers are sadly lacking and potentially unable to move forward with.

Skills training in universities may be controversial, but students don't just learn to be journalists, or just learn to be film-makers. They learn to critically assess their cultural production, to understand that it can be part of a system that is steeped in cause and consequence. They learn that communication and its changing landscape needs to be understood not just by them but by everyone. Creating a message is what Media is all about.

Whether we like it or not, the study of the Media is one of the defining subjects of our age, so isn't it finally time we took it seriously?

The word 'media' is derived from the word medium, signifying mode or carrier. Media is intended to reach and address a large target group or audience. The word was first used in respect of books and newspapers i.e. print media and with the advent of technology, media now encompasses television, movies, radio and internet. In today's world, media is as essential as our daily needs. The media of today is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and the strengthening of society.

Media can sway and challenge democracy. It should and does act as a watchdog to protect the public interest against malpractice and create public awareness. Media heightens awareness, teaches moral pathways and suggests new ways of believing and thinking. It enables those who feel they have no voice to develop one through social use and enables the public to stand together against those whose beliefs and attitudes are wrong.

It would be short sighted of any member of society to think that Media is just a 'soft subject for arty types'. Perhaps those that think this are the people being left behind by the rapid development and growth mind set of the next generation of employees, primed to see exactly where their knowledge of how to socially advertise a business, promote moving image online, develop the next big app, create a world of gaming, or be involved in the making of great TV and films can take them. Let's face it – without Media, we are nothing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### *What are the Key Concepts underpinning the subject?*

Media Studies provides students with opportunities to discuss and create media texts. On the EdExcel BTEC course, we look at all forms of media - from **established print media** like **newspapers, magazines, TV and film**, to newer digital forms like **websites, games and apps**. Media Studies is unique in that it synthesises the analytical with the practical - asking students to consider the **key concepts of audience, language, institutions and representations** in all of their work. It tests their ability to take their **theoretical knowledge** and place it in a practical representation, for 'real world' audiences.

Media products have saturated almost every part of public and private life. The creative and media sectors currently include some of the most powerful, successful and sophisticated industries in the country, especially in the **world of online design, advertising and influencing**. Media Studies examines all forms of visual communication and enables students to be participants in media practices. It hopes to empower students so that they are able to recognise the way in which our **consumption of media influences our behaviours, attitudes and beliefs**.