

## English Literature and English Language Curriculum III

### Ambition

- The department's mission is to promote a love of English so that our students leave us with the ability to be successful writers and analytical thinkers: grappling with moral and social dilemmas raised in a sensitive and reasoned way.
- We use strategies such as 'Reading Reconsidered' to ensure that all students are equipped with approaches to understand more complex texts even after they leave us. We hope they can use these concepts to flourish in post-16 and university level study.
- We acquire the skills to be able to hold their own in debates on far-reaching topics through equipping them to understand different points of view. We teach to the domain across all year groups ensuring that we expose our students to a wide range of texts, ideas and concepts from the 19th century and beyond.
- Last year's introduction of the spotlights has helped us to consolidate the vast array of potential careers that can be linked back to success in English. The department invited in a solicitor with an English Literature degree last year to promote the value of the subject and its various routes to thriving in a top job.
- The curriculum promotes underrepresented groups including women, minority ethnic groups and the working class. We do this through the teaching of literature in a sensitive way to champion the plight these groups have faced historically. Furthermore, we challenge this struggle in contemporary society.
- Diversity is primarily expressed through the poetry from other cultures that all year groups are exposed to. Students are expected to discuss these matters through a teacher-led conversation that attempts to eradicate any misconceptions and more importantly, pre-conceived prejudices. Studying poetry not only allows an appreciation of the literary canon but also, we use this as a way to tap into the cultural heritage and backgrounds of our students. We use the exploration of modern poetry to enhance the appreciation of this literary expression and support preparation for the unseen component of their exam. This is also utilised to explore literature from other cultures and traditions and move away from the more Eurocentric focus of the current syllabus.
- We have held performances of Shakespeare's work from the Young Shakespeare Company and we have been on expeditions to the theatre to see various plays, expeditions to the Bradford literary festival and inter-school competitions to promote oracy. We also take the opportunity to attend 'Poetry Live!' to engage with the poets of the GCSE set poems. Additionally for this year we have invited in a theatre company to perform a dramatic version of 'A Christmas Carol'.

We provide the opportunity to advance students' cultural capital and knowledge of current affairs through our expertly resourced literary non-fiction sources. We advocate students having a clear opinion on controversial and key topics that are prevalent in the news and in society with a view to support their ability to have discursive reasoning. Furthermore, we provide the opportunity to explore aspects of the domain and push students' understanding of the origins of a lot of literature and the works many writers have been inspired by: Greek, Roman and Norse mythology plus medieval myths and legends. We aim for our students to be familiar with common allusions often made in works of literature: biblical stories and famous traditional literary works such as Dante's 'Inferno' from his 'Divine Comedy'. We want our students to explore the idea of creativity to enhance their ability to analyse literature. Moreover, this should also advance their own skills regarding thinking creatively when writing their own narratives.

### Rationale

- Academic rigour is explicitly embedded within each scheme of work. Through the texts that we chose to study in Year 7 to Year 9 through to the academic subject terminology the students are taught across their five-year curriculum.
- We prioritise the teaching of the set texts in Y10 - this strategy has been proven with exceptional GCSE English Literature results since 2016. Years 7 to 9 are focused on embedding the broad skills of reading and writing through a granular dissection of the GCSE assessments objectives. We have - in the last two years - radically reformed our approach with regards to teaching the younger year groups and ensured it is differentiated for the needs of our groups and their reading ages.
- Unlike many schools, we do not deliver a class reader in English lessons. Instead, we use carefully chosen extracts in booklets of fiction and non-fiction. This is to expose the children to as many different types of writing as possible and increase their cultural enrichment. This enhances their capacity to perform at GCSE level across the two disciplines. We are in the advantageous position of all students reading full novels in DEAR and as a reading fluency strategy we have a class reader programme so that they hear a full text read out by a member of staff.
- We use our curriculum to provide daily lessons:
  - 7E1 and 7E2: 5; 7E3-5: 6; 8E1 and 8E2: 5; 8E3-5: 6; Y9: 5, Y10: 5; Y11: 5 plus 11E1 have 1x academic MM and 1x academic DEAR supplementary to the main timetable. 11E2 to 11E4 have 1x academic MM supplementary but have much smaller groupings. We also strategically use prep for Year 11.
- We use AQA which is the most common exam board across the country for both English Literature and English Language. This is to ensure fairness of marking and ensures that students and staff can easily access resources. We know that OCR and Edexcel are perceived as private school exam boards and could compound our challenges with regards to cultural capital.



## Concepts

- As a skills-based subject we endeavour to ensure that all students are able to master the basics with regard to technical accuracy before learning more complex grammatical structures. Reading for meaning is crucial to facilitate understanding. Only when this is achieved can higher order skills such as analysis, evaluation, comparison and synthesis be successful.
- Academic rigour is embedded within each scheme of work. We intelligently sequence throughout: we choose shorter texts to study in Years 7 to 9 and academic subject terminology and evaluative language is built upon year by year. We also follow a writing mastery curriculum which builds up skills year by year.
- All students receive retrieval practice in lessons through the 'Do Now' tasks that have been carefully planned and sequenced to maximise retention of key knowledge.
- Interleaved-revision of powerful knowledge is modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low-stakes quizzing and practice which take place both through Morning Meeting and 'Do Now' activities in lessons. Extended essay practice is also a priority for homework to ensure that students practise the rigour demanded of constructing an extended piece of writing for both the literature and language GCSEs.
- Mathematical fluency is not prioritised but reading fluency is ranked as the key priority and most lessons will see the students reading with the support of a teacher.

## Implementation

- Broadly, the HoD takes ownership for Year 10 and Year 11 curriculum, the AHoD takes responsibility for Year 8 and 9 and the pioneer looks after Year 7. All the qualified Year 7 to 9 team are experts in their area however everyone must feel confident on all of the GCSE English Literature texts in case they are drawn upon for prep/revision/DEAR. Each member of staff has oversight of a year group with regards to managing work for students who may be isolating due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- We have a very experienced literature and language examiner in the team who also leads on English across the Trust; a lower ability expert and a higher attaining specialist as the more senior team. Succession planning takes place to ensure that these skills can permeate through the rest of the team. It is evident that CPD and coaching is successful through the progress of our students in cycle assessments across both language and literature. We also try to observe each other to help support best practice.
- We support our disadvantaged students by ensuring that they are a priority for all classroom teachers - this is typically identified through the IP sheets. The English department is committed to trying to eradicate the progress gap that disadvantaged students face. All PP students in Year 11 are invited to after school revision. We have smaller groups in Year 11 that support most of our disadvantaged children - only three PP students in the year group are in a class larger than 27.
- We ensure that all students are provided with copies of their set texts, supplementary booklets and text books at no cost to them. This is to ensure equality across all groups of students. We provide 'The Art of Poetry' book for all our high ability students to support stretch and challenge.
- SEND students are supported through the curriculum being tailored to provide additional support for these learners. For example, in Year 9 students in group 4 will study the poems they will be taught at GCSE. This enables more interleaving and revision of the literature topics: the sheer amount of content that needs to be remembered for literature can often prove a greater challenge for our learners with additional educational needs. Additionally in language, students follow a writing mastery curriculum which enables them to be confident users of basic grammatical structures and punctuation before moving on to more complex structures. This enables all students to become assured writers using a high level of accuracy.
- Language analysis builds from the 'feature spotting' our students tend to complete upon entry to KS3, to the layered, complex, perceptive and detailed analysis we would see our Y11s completing. This is built up through the heavily scaffolded 'explosion' modelling in Year 7, through analysing our consciously chosen sources within our booklets in Year 8 in full paragraphs, then the seamless transition to beginning literature in Year 9 whereby the students will progress to writing full essays.
- Year 7 and Year 8: the coverage of Shakespeare texts such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Romeo and Juliet' are taught in order for the students to have an appreciation and understanding of the form of comedies and tragedies and also the rich literary heritage of Shakespeare. Additionally, booklets using different fictional and non-fictional texts are deliberately resourced to try to span as many styles of writing as possible.
- Year 9: exposed to the concept of the well-made play, ideas about socialism, social class and the role of women in the 20th century.
- Year 10: rigorous and bold set text teaching and language paper practice. For example we will study every single scene in detail in 'Macbeth' unlike many schools across the country - equally, we teach the highest level context of the tragedy which can be seen in the LTPs. Teaching of poetry is sequenced intelligently by theme. This has been consistently refined since the specification began in 2016.
- Year 11: similarly rigorous and bold set text teaching and language paper practice. The thesis-led approach for essays is truly honed in this year. This ensures our students are extremely prepared for the challenges of A-level.
- We assess two cycles in the year on an element of the language skills in Year 7 and Year 8. Year 9 transition to comparative poetry essays and language assessments across two cycles. In Year 10 we assess literature based essays in C1 and less formally in C2. We do a full suite of language papers and one full literature paper at the end of Year 10 to provide substantive data for Year 11. Year 11 are rigorously and frequently assessed.



- Marking allocations are shared by the team across all cycles and mocks in order to support teacher workload.
- We have adapted the curriculum due to the pandemic in different ways for each year group. We are now teaching a significant amount of explicit grammar and evaluative language. When students are in isolation we ensure that remote learning plans using booklets are followed.

*Powerful knowledge: It is the substantive content, agreed by the subject specialist as being the best knowledge in the discipline that opens up opportunities for the student. It will not be picked up by students from their everyday life.*

*Cultural Capital: It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.*

