

English Department Curriculum Intent:

Our intent is to nurture a genuine love for literature by exposing students to a diverse range of texts, forms and genres at the same time as developing students' critical thinking skills, creating literary critics. The curriculum explores the development of storytelling through poetry, plays, books and a range of non-fiction texts across time. Units of work are linked thematically at both KS3 and 4, helping students to see the interconnectedness of literature and understand its place in developing and challenging our social and political cultural context. These links are not just drawn within units but also across the whole curriculum. The curriculum uses these texts as stimulus for developing students' own creative expression, using a foundation of literary and rhetorical devices. Through a range of oracy tasks, we will develop discussion skills and create eloquent speakers, who can advocate for themselves. As well as an appreciation for literature, our curriculum is designed to provide pupils with practical reading and writing knowledge and skills to prepare them for later life. Moreover, the choice of texts encourages a curiosity for the "big questions" in life and using the universality of literature to enhance tolerance, respect and character development, as well as using diverse texts to develop an empathy for the world around them. Opportunities to return to key knowledge and skills are embedded throughout to help with retrieval and retention. Literacy is a key focus; this is mostly done responsively; teachers use starter slides to get students to respond to immediate literacy errors. We passionately believe that all students deserve an equal access to high expectations irrespective of background or ability. As such, students are taught in mixed ability groups throughout KS3 and 4 and the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of mixed ability teaching. We have done this by selecting challenging texts and themes, but also by using scaffolding, chunking, effective questioning and differentiated outcomes to cater to abilities. Our ethos is to teach to the top and support down.

At KS3 we aim to prepare pupils for the demands of GCSE specifications by equipping them with essential knowledge and skills, whilst also building upon prior learning at Key Stage 2, working with several feeder primary schools. Students will have a range of tier-2 and -3 vocabulary listed as key knowledge for each unit which can be used to develop specific and exploratory responses at KS4. Enrichment lessons are designed to explore the cultural capital that is needed to access the texts in their main English lessons, but also to broaden their own understanding of the world around them.

At KS4 we aim to continue to nurture a love of literature and language by teaching a "cold read" of all set texts in Y10, focusing on plot, character and themes followed by analysis and evaluation of methods, developing critical thinking. In Y11 students return to these texts with a secure foundation of knowledge now ready apply exam skills. Language and literature are taught discretely but they are linked thematically to enhance enjoyment whilst also exploring the contextual factors surrounding set texts. This thematic approach allows students to develop the necessary skills for success without "teaching to the exam."