

English Curriculum Statement

Key Message – Intention

We want our learners to become informed, critical and articulate evaluators of a wide range of ideas and texts, including their own.

We want our learners to become effective communicators who can use spoken and written language confidently, accurately and appropriately to make a suitable impact on their audiences.

Our subject plays an essential part in developing the cultural capital of our learners and enabling them to develop as reflective persons who can contribute positively to the fabric of our society.

Serving all students equally:

Our Let's Think in English (cognitive acceleration) approach from Year 7 onwards encourages all learners to take risks when discussing texts and ideas. All are entered for GCSE English Literature and English Language in Year 11.

Teaching methods are adapted according to the prior knowledge and needs of learners. GCSE exam texts provide a rich reading experience. Teachers, working alongside TAs, provide scaffolding and explicit teaching for novice learners whilst offering enquiry-based approaches and targeted modelling to learners at different stages.

Core Message – Sequential Approach:

As learners progress through the school, they meet increasingly complex and demanding stimulus material, writing tasks and spoken language opportunities.

Through a largely genre-based approach in Key Stage 3 learners are encouraged to make connections between texts from different eras, to consider the impact of contexts and make increasingly perceptive evaluative responses to language and structure. Learners move from independent reading for pleasure and curiosity towards a more considered preparation of set texts, where notes are organised to keep track of key themes, character development and contextual factors. They develop a growing bank of genre-specific subject terms.

In writing, learners move from understanding the importance of structure and appreciating the impact of language towards making independent decisions about how to influence their readers or listeners. They are introduced to more nuanced language choices as they engage with a wider variety of increasingly complex reading material.

In spoken language, learners move from rehearsed poetry and drama performances, through group discussion and more formal public speaking situations, to debates on increasingly complex issues arising from texts.

Core Message – Teaching Approaches

Where appropriate we use dual coding to enhance learning and retrieval from memory (Paivio 1990)

We provide scaffolding and explicit teaching for novice learners ensuring that knowledge is provided in smaller chunks to help them process it and avoid cognitive overload (Kirschner, 2002.)

Our more expert learners are offered enquiry-based approaches to learning (Kalyuga 2007) enabling them to develop greater independence. For all students, there is explicit teaching of more effective writing styles and sharing of excellent student work via visualisers.

Influenced by the King's College, London's *Let's Think in English* programme we deploy social construction and cognitive conflict to enable learners to reassess their own thinking and the potential meanings of texts (Piaget and Vygotsky). This encourages the growth mindset that increases pupils' attainment, self-confidence and willingness to take risks (Dweck 2006).

We offer a language-rich curriculum – ensuring that EAL and novice learners are immersed in high-quality English. We use Word of the Week and spelling tests to bridge the language gap (Quigley 2017).

We use interleaving (Rohrer et al 2015) and retrieval practice (Barenberg Roeder and Dutke, 2018) to help students learn and retain knowledge in the long term.

Core Message - Development of Whole Child and Catholic Ethos

Through discussion of texts and ideas learners understand themselves and the world around them; they are equipped to speak with confidence in a range of situations.

Learners are encouraged to make links between ideas explored in texts from different eras and current ethical dilemmas, news stories and political events across the world.

Exposing learners to quality texts and ideas enables them to wonder, to experiment and to take risks as they make discoveries about the power of language and the impact of collaboration. Through English they develop the deep learning and skills needed to understand their vocation, undertake a fulfilled life and become ready for the fast-changing world of work. Our emphasis on accurate, effective writing tailored to purpose and on clear, confident speaking enables learners to impress prospective employers and make progress in their chosen careers; our emphasis on social construction enables them to participate effectively in their communities and in collaborative projects at work, college or university.

Core Message - Focus for Change

Each year we review our curriculum to reflect our core values more precisely, to provide clearer progression from Key Stage 2 to the demands of Key Stage 4 and 5 and to offer more varied types of assessment.

We regularly review our exam provision to cater for the changing needs of our students: this has led to the introduction of Entry Level GCSE English Language for some students in Year 9 and of a new English Language and Literature A Level.

We continue to develop flip-learning tasks for home study to enable higher-order thinking in lessons. We continue to build a bank of work for modelling and standardisation purposes and to modify our revision videos for Year 11 students, so that all students can access revision guidance.

In line with whole school policies, we continue to review our marking to enable students to gain the most from constructive feedback.

The rest

Evidence for the need for changes to our curriculum is gathered from book samplings, moderation of work in Faculty meetings, learning walks, peer lesson observations, student feedback and assessment data, including analysis of examination results, and from staff who are undertaking research as part of their own professional development. Our curriculum is reviewed at Faculty meetings: immediate action is taken to amend the curriculum if it is clear (through analysis of exam performance, exercise books, and student feedback, for example) that learners' knowledge is not secure; major revamps occur during the summer term where colleagues have time to work together on different aspects.

In Years 7 and 8 classes are taught in mixed ability, as recommended for the Let's Think in English programme. Students with specific literacy needs receive additional support, through Teaching Assistants or mentors, to help them bridge the gap. From Year 9 students are arranged in broadly mixed ability groups with a very small set in each band for students who need greater support.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 all students have a library lesson once a fortnight.

Homework is set weekly for all students from Year 7 onwards. We use flip learning or preparation for test essays and in-class assessments. For marked pieces we provide assessment criteria in grids – facilitating clear feedback, peer review opportunities and a visual record of progress and areas for improvement.

TA support with additional scaffolding is offered to our least able; our most able are asked more challenging questions.