

English and Media

The English Area of Learning has consistently achieved above National Average GCSE scores over a number of years. The last Ofsted report from April 2018 states that:

"Inspectors identified particularly strong learning and progress in English, Spanish, French, art, dance, drama, technology and psychology. In these lessons, learning walks confirmed teachers' secure subject knowledge, strong relationships with pupils and supportive interactions.

In addition, the English department has worked hard to develop disadvantaged pupils' reading skills through the accelerated reader programme. The programme has seen a considerable improvement in reading scores, especially in Years 7 and 8.

English lessons observed contributed significantly towards pupils' progress as a result of strong lesson planning and challenging work."

The department takes a collaborative approach and values each individual's skills, interests and strategies for teaching and learning. We welcome new ideas and look forward to the involvement of the person appointed in our on-going drive to raise standards even further. We are justly proud of our achievements and believe that our continued successes are due to enthusiasm, commitment and continuous development.

We continually evaluate and develop our schemes in order to motivate and best meet the needs of all our students and staff. We believe that good teaching using a variety of appropriate strategies promotes engagement and good behaviour. We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and we provide regular opportunities for self and peer assessment.

We value and invest heavily into the professional development of the teachers within the department and encourage colleagues to widen their areas of interest and expertise. All staff are supported through the line-management system and the school has a well-respected induction programme for new staff, who are also mentored by a colleague within the department.

Staffing Structure and who's who

There are currently 11 full and part-time members including:

Leader of Learning: Clare King

Leader of KS5: Shingi Munda

Leader of KS4: Charlotte Ellis

Leader of KS3: Sam Wynne-Pennels

Intervention teacher (for English and Maths): Vicky Humphrey

Courses and Exam Boards

We offer AQA English Language and English Literature GCSE which we start teaching in the second term of Year 9. Usually a small number of lower ability or vulnerable students are also entered for an Entry Level or Functional Skills qualification.

In the 6th form we offer 3 A levels: English Literature (AQA), English Language (AQA) and Media Studies (Eduqas). We also offer GCSE retake for those students for did not gain a grade 4 in the summer exam series.

Development Plan Priorities

In line with the Whole School Improvement Plan, the Area of Learning priorities for this academic year in summary are:

Key Stage 5

- Ensure KS5 students receive a regular programme of accountability in order to achieve their target grades
- Increase uptake of our subjects at A Level
- Improve outcomes in Media Studies and in retake English Language GCSE

Key Stage 4

- Improve outcomes at KS4 so that Language results are more on par with Literature
- Develop a specific English Language teaching and homework programme that supports the development of language skills
- Develop the wide programme of literacy support and intervention we provide at KS4

Key Stage 3

- Embed Accelerated Reader and Bedrock as a part of the Literacy drive at KS3
- Improve writing skills at KS3 – review the KS3 curriculum to ensure that writing tasks focus on specific skills and ensure a more explicit progression from KS3 to KS4

Additional Department Specific Info

Key Stage 3

In Years 7-9 students are divided into two half-year groups. All classes are taught in mixed ability learning groups. Our Key Stage 3 schemes have been revised to increase successful transition from primary school, better embed transferrable skills and improve our teaching and learning.

We are continually reviewing our teaching strategies and resources at KS3, working to extend our programme of study in order to build on prior achievement and develop the skills required for success at GCSE and A Level. All colleagues are involved in the sharing of good practice. Our KS3 schemes of work contain integrated reading, writing and oral work, which are regularly assessed and progress reported centrally. Students study a broad range of fiction (prose, poetry, and drama), non-fiction and media texts. They are encouraged to read widely and independently and, in order to improve literacy, we subscribe to the Accelerated Reader programme for all of Year 7 and 8 students. Additionally, all Year 7 and 8 students regularly complete Bedrock Learning vocabulary building homework tasks.

Key Stage 4

Students start their GCSE programme of study in Term 3 of Year 9, with a focus on developing a range of key skills ahead of their full GCSE course in Year 10 and 11. We have literacy support groups who have weekly intervention lessons, and a Cambridge group for the delivery of the Entry Level qualification.

Key Stage 5

KS5 classes are generally shared between two teachers and, as at the other Key Stages, a dynamic and innovative approach to teaching and learning is demanded at A level. An increasing number of students choose to continue with the study of English and Media Studies. Our Media Studies course has changed in recent years and we have invested in staff training and development to ensure it continues to be delivered well. We especially welcome applicants with experience of teaching this subject.

Accommodation; Events, Enrichment and Links

We have 10 dedicated English classrooms. One of those is a small media suite with computers for use by Media Studies or small A level groups. We issue iPads to students in KS3 and Y12, and also have good office facilities for all of our staff. We organise regular theatre trips to encourage cultural enrichment. We promote creative writing and frequently submit entries to a range of national writing competitions; this has led to a number of individual successes at national level in recent years. We share close links with the Religious Studies department within school, regularly sharing good practice with their teachers. To support our delivery of the AQA GCSE, we are part of a wider network of local schools following this specification.

Any other Celebration Points

Our consistently good exam results reflect the ongoing hard work of the department members who are determined to help students achieve their best. A pre-COVID 'deep dive' by a triad of visiting Headteachers praised many aspects of our practice. Every year we offer multiple placements to a number of PGCE students from different universities.