



Communications Learning Area

The Communications Learning Area comprises the subjects of English, Modern Foreign Languages and Drama. We are an enthusiastic and innovative team united in the belief that to succeed in the modern world, students will need to develop the skills and confidence to communicate effectively in a wide range of contexts.

The Curriculum

All three subject areas offer a stimulating and challenging curriculum that seeks to meet the school's curriculum intent. We aim to expose students to important concepts and ideas through broad and rich curriculums that create literate, articulate and confident learners. As well as ensuring students develop the subject specific knowledge they need to make progress academically, we aim to ensure our curriculums place value in, explore and promote 4 key pillars; Diversity and Inclusivity; Literacy and Articulacy; Life After School and Life Beyond School.

MFL

We believe in the many advantages of learning another language and all students are given this opportunity from the start of their journey at SWR. At Key Stage 3, students begin by studying French in Year 7, Spanish is then introduced in Year 8 and all students study two languages until the end of Key Stage 3 when they make their GCSE choices, with both languages on offer.

Students receive four lessons of languages over the two-week timetable. The curriculum is innovative and exciting, using a range of multimedia resources to ensure students are engaged and motivated to learn this important subject. We currently make use of the extensively researched and acclaimed NCELP curriculum to ensure all students develop core skills and understanding in their language learning with an enhanced focus on cultural capital as students enjoy exploring and celebrating works and topics of cultural significance alongside their development of language skills. For example, looking at poetry from French soldiers in the trenches or exploring works of literature such as 'Le Petit Prince.' Likewise, opportunities for cross-curricular links with other subjects within the Learning Area and across the school are wide-ranging and help to enhance students' learning experience.

At Key Stage 4, students can opt to take either one or both Language subjects as a GCSE course with the exam board AQA. We provide five hours of lessons over the fortnight and subscribe to the Kerboodle and Exampro digital platforms for additional resources to support students. We also occasionally enter students for other languages alongside their GCSE course as 'self-study students' guided by the Language teachers in the department. We have done this to great success with a range of languages including Italian, Dutch and Thai.

Broadening the cultural experiences of our students and highlighting the rich opportunities that language study brings is important to us. The MFL team regularly participate in competitions and offer enrichment activities such as the Foreign Language Spelling Bee, the Translation Bee, Flash Fiction, Young Translators and Poesiaert, which have showcased the vibrant creativity and skills of so many of our students. We also love organising trips abroad, allowing students to immerse themselves in other cultures and put their language skills to the test.

English

English and Literacy is at the core of the school's curriculum with students in Key Stage 3 receiving eight hours of English lessons over a two-week timetable. The curriculum is varied and engaging, it seeks to expose students to a wide range of diverse literature and literary concepts whilst developing technical accuracy and effective communication skills to build the foundations needed not only for the challenges of GCSE but for

success in the world beyond school. In addition to this, Literature's ability to explore and contemplate the human condition means that many issues linked to Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development are integral to this subject and we seek to develop students' cultural capital wherever possible.

Central to the English curriculum is an emphasis on the importance and value of reading widely. Reading is encouraged in every English lesson, forms part of fortnightly library lessons and is used for extended learning projects at Key stage 3 to ensure all students are given ample opportunity to read.

Through working closely with our feeder primaries, our assessment model at KS3 begins by considering prior learning to ensure that students make continuous progress and build on the knowledge already attained whilst taking measures to quickly close any gaps that may be present.

At Key Stage 4 all students study both Language and Literature with AQA as the exam board. In some circumstances, students may complete alternative qualifications such as Entry level or Functional skills English. Whilst the schemes of learning are far more prescriptive here, there is a conscious effort from the English team to ensure that students continue to be exposed to a wide and diverse range of texts. Whether this be unseen contemporary poetry or regular reading of non-fiction articles on the latest topics hitting the headlines, our goal is to get students to see that English is far bigger than the reading list of any exam.

The English team, together with our Librarian, strive to provide a range of extracurricular activities some of which include Book Clubs in each year group, trips to see performances of relevant texts and a debating club that competes with other schools across the county.

Drama

All students receive one drama lesson a fortnight at KS3. The curriculum gives them experience of a range of dramatic techniques and builds their knowledge base in preparation for GCSE should they opt for it. Drama is a very popular subject in the school, student enthusiasm and talent ensures that we are able to regularly stage performances for parents, carers, local schools and the wider community. The number of students opting for Drama at KS4 is good and results are exceptional.

Staff

The Communications Learning Area is staffed entirely by specialists, all of whom teach across the KS3 and KS4 curriculum. We are a committed and supportive team who strive to bring the best learning experiences to our students and enjoy collaborating closely on developing practice and the links between our departments. Several members of the Learning Area have whole school leadership responsibilities, both academic and pastoral. Having a number of staff in pastoral leadership roles places the department in a strong position in ensuring relationships with students are positive and supportive.

Accommodation

Each member of the Learning Area has their own teaching base and all are situated in one 'Communications' building, making collaboration and sharing of best practice in our Learning Area very natural. The department has access to its own bank of laptops for students to work on independently without the need to book into one of the school's three IT suites. We also enjoy the benefits of a vibrant, inviting and well stocked library, situated at the heart of the school. This space is available for booking by all subjects.

There are two Modern Foreign Language classrooms, ensuring this small team can work closely and effectively together. Drama lessons are held in one of two specially equipped rooms; a drama studio with full lighting and sound rig and a Dance studio.

Support

The School's Support for Learning Department offers a range of support for students. There is a strong emphasis on literacy support at KS3, using a number of recognised schemes to provide and track targeted interventions for students needing additional support. The English department also has a specialist teaching assistant who provides additional support in lessons where this is deemed useful. We also use a range of intervention strategies at KS4 to support students of all abilities in achieving their targets including looking at alternative qualifications such as entry level and functional skills English where appropriate and the tiered entry for Languages.