



English Department Information

Introduction to the Department

We are a large English department comprised currently of thirteen full-time and part-time specialist English teachers, some of whom have responsibilities beyond the department (such as Head of House). The Head of Department is supported by a Second in Department i/c KS4, and a KS3 English Coordinator. The department has a strong track record of offering career development opportunities, and we encourage all colleagues to lead on and take ownership of aspects of our curriculum as part of our collegiate ethos. We are proud of our identity as a department and the consistent diet of very good teaching we offer our students; this is reflected in excellent GCSE and A level results.

Teaching

- **KS3 information:** we teach in mixed ability groups across KS3, and have high expectations for all our students. Our curriculum is planned around topics such as 'Difficult Choices', 'Visions', 'Conflict', 'Inequality' and 'New Worlds'. As the December 2022 Ofsted report notes, we incorporate into our curriculum a wide variety of challenging literature, including more 'canonical' texts and writers. Shakespeare is studied in each year of KS3, and students also read and learn about the Romantics, Dickens, narrative poetry and literature about war; our students also study modern literary texts such as *When the Sky Falls*, *A Monster Calls* and *Maggot Moon*. We also teach a wide range of non-fiction texts, and our students have numerous opportunities to write creatively. In year 7, students have seven lessons per two-week cycle, and six in both years 8 and 9.
- **KS4 Information:** we teach the Eduqas GCSE courses in English Language and English Literature. We maintain our approach to mixed ability grouping in KS4, though there is sometimes one small group of students who are taught as an ability group. At present, students in years 10 and 11 have different teachers for English Language and English Literature, making up eight lessons per two-week cycle. The literary texts students read and study include *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *An Inspector Calls*, *The Woman in Black*, *Macbeth* and a poetry anthology; colleagues are, however, at liberty to teach whichever texts they feel are appropriate on the specification. The English Language course is well-resourced and planned around topics such as 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Childhood and Education'. Since the introduction of new specifications and exams, and when such data was comparable to other institutions in 2017-19, St Laurence English GCSE results were always in the top quintile for attainment and achievement nationally.
- **Sixth Form information:** we offer A levels in English Literature (AQA A), English Language and Literature (OCR/EMC) and Film Studies (Eduqas). These courses are very popular, and most colleagues are expected to teach A level. Students have nine lessons per two-week cycle. Like our results at GCSE, our students' achievement at A level is excellent, and we are regularly highly-rated grade 2 or 3 on the ALPS 'thermometer' for student achievement.

Learning Outside the Classroom – Enrichment Activities

We offer theatre trips to students when appropriate, and, when we can, organise visits from writers whose work students study. Colleagues in the department offer writing clubs (story competitions, articles for *The Wiltshire Times* and the school magazine, *Connect*); the student-led St Laurence Feminista club is also overseen by the department. In the past, students have taken part in public speaking competitions and read their work at events such as the First World War Centenary commemoration in Bradford on Avon. Colleagues have also taken part in supporting students on the Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions.

Environment

The English department is accommodated in Fitzmaurice building on the ground and first floor. There is a small English office and a storeroom for texts and resources.