

English Curriculum

The Vision for all our students who study English (Intent)

English is at the core of everything that we do as humans, forming the basis of all forms of communication in which we engage. With this in mind, our intent in the English department is to provide pupils with an excellent foundation in written and spoken English in order to be fully integrated into all aspects of life, both in and out of education.

The teaching of English at King Edward's is carefully planned to encompass both Language and Literature from Year 7, working towards the examination years but with an emphasis on pupils developing a love of writing, reading, speaking and literature. Examination skills and vocabulary are embedded from the day they start at the school, but in such a way that they are not overwhelmed with the prospect of GCSEs; we want them to enjoy the subject so that they are fully engaged in English throughout the school.

We aim to provide a curriculum which embeds the skills of analysis right from the start, placing a wide range of genres, styles and approaches throughout. We are not afraid to challenge our pupils, and want them to be confident and comfortable in handling high-level texts during their whole time with us. We do not want pupils to be systematically taught the same texts multiple times solely for the purpose of GCSEs: we want them to experience a whole range of literature from across time so that context is at the heart of their learning, and so that they have a deep-rooted understanding of English as a subject, rather than a thorough knowledge of a limited range of examination texts. Through the study of literature, pupils are introduced to the core skills required for English Language, making the skills for this aspect of the subject a central component of their lessons. In addition, we aim to broaden our pupils' technical accuracy, vocabulary and written responses with weekly stand-alone lessons that offer all our students a core program of essential skills in order to establish a strong foundation of written competency.

Rationale (Implementation)

Our curriculum is based on the key elements of the 2014 National Curriculum document, with a core emphasis on:

- Spoken language: our curriculum is designed to cover all aspects of English, including the oral and aural mediums. To this end, the formal half termly assessments include some that are focused on speech-giving and presentations. In addition, our teaching fully encourages pupils to engage in discussions and questioning activities in every lesson utilising a wide range of questioning and prediction methods including Bloom's Taxonomy in order to make predictions, approach their studies in a critical manner, and for teachers to check understanding.
- Reading: the KS3 curriculum at King Edward's has been carefully mapped-out to give our pupils a broad and rich diet of prose, poetry and drama across time, starting with early English texts in Year 7 through to Dystopian literature in Year 9, and focusing on plot, character, setting and the impact on a reader or audience. Key elements in each time period and genre are taught in order to ensure that pupils have an innate understanding of the importance of the changing contexts: an element that is central to GCSE and A Level study in English. The department is not afraid to challenge pupils with the text choices, and it is the delivery of the work, rather than the texts themselves that are differentiated, in order to

ensure that all of our pupils receive the same rich diet regardless of their ability. Our pupils' broad knowledge is then honed at GCSE level, where aspects of genre and context are revisited in more depth in order to solidify their earlier teaching and understanding. For example, extracts studied in Year 8 as part of the Victorian Life unit form the basis of our GCSE teaching on pre-1900 Literature texts. Through this broad KS3 curriculum, pupils are introduced to new vocabulary within the context of the texts which in turn aids their own language breadth.

In addition, the functional use of English is both explicitly and implicitly taught. The eight central fiction and non-fiction writing types (creative writing, leaflets, formal & informal letters, articles, reviews, reports and speeches) are written into our curriculum, being regularly revisited and consistently taught across all year groups.

The department is fully supportive of the schools' 'reading for all' initiative, offering pupils a wide range of texts to read during their designated private reading time. In addition, some units of work require pupils to study a text of their choice through independent methods in order to actively encourage reading autonomy.

- Writing: through their study of reading and literature, pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of mediums. The general premise is for pupils to study and critically appraise a range of reading materials and genres in order to then reproduce the variety of styles in their own writing: it is important to appreciate and analyse how others have created a piece in order to enjoy similar success in one's own writing. Therefore, reading and writing are wholly complimentary in our curriculum. Pupils are taught the importance of persuasive writing, rhetoric, bias and argument, as well as focusing on the importance of layout, tone and structure. The key to writing is established through the genre, audience and purpose and as such, these elements are explicitly taught across all years. Through our marking policy of pupils having time to give direct responses to teacher feedback, our learners are taught the importance of editing; whilst planning, drafting and proof-reading are explicitly covered in our planning and teaching.

In addition to writing methods and opportunities that are complementary to our set curriculum, all KS3 pupils experience weekly one-off 'writing challenges' that are stand-alone tasks required to stimulate the imagination, and encourage a diverse and fluent approach to a wide range of fiction and factual tasks. These lessons offer challenging opportunities for pupils to write, whilst giving them a set 'recipe' of things to include in order to broaden their vocabulary and rhetorical devices; self and peer-marking also encourages pupils to proof-read and edit their own work whilst seeing successful examples from their peers.

- The department SPaG recognises the importance of a solid foundation of technical accuracy in written and spoken English. To that end, weekly skills lessons are taught in line with a department-led scheme that covers the basics of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This scheme can be made bespoke by our teaching staff according to the needs of individual learners.

The formal half-termly assessments have been planned to ensure that all of the above are taught and assessed on a regular basis, using the language and format utilised at GCSE examination level; this is to ensure that our pupils are very familiar with the structure, expectations, mark schemes and assessment methods used at GCSE level from when they first arrive at the school.

- Our curriculum is based on the key elements of mathematics in the 2014 National curriculum

KS4 exam courses

The department teaches to the Eduqas GCSE English Language and English Literature specification. The courses are taught collaboratively, though pupils achieve two separate grades.

GCSE skills work starts in Year 9, with pupils looking at specific aspects of GCSE English Language reading and writing requirements during weekly lessons.

The skills of analysis, essay writing and critical response are taught throughout Year 9, though GCSE Literature texts are not explicitly taught until the Summer term of Year 9.

Throughout Year 10 and Year 11, pupils have specific weekly lessons set aside to cover the English Language skills requirements. Each term, the focus changes in order to cover the reading and writing units of the fiction and non-fiction GCSE papers. The study of each unit culminates in pupils sitting a formal test on the specific component that has been taught.

The GCSE Literature requires considerably more content teaching and consequently, more teaching time is given over to this aspect of the course. The department's overview allows a complete term for the teaching of each core text, with additional opportunity for texts to be revisited.

English is taught in 5 sets, allowing class teachers to differentiate work according to the needs of individual pupils.

The department meets on a regular basis, allowing for collaborative planning and the sharing of resources. On such occasions, pupil progress is discussed and pupils are redirected to different sets as and when necessary; this is aided by the fact that all English staff teach to the stipulated curriculum, making movement between sets straightforward.

Smaller sets are achieved for pupils who find the work challenging to access; teachers here are supported to teach their pupils in the most productive manner, using repetition and time-managed units of work to good effect.

Pupils in the higher sets are offered more challenge in their teaching, with an increased sense of independence in their learning. Such pupils are actively encouraged to embark upon A Level English courses, with wider reading being offered to any pupil who wishes to do so.

The department is developing a range of opportunities for our pupils, including theatre visits, the national Poetry by Heart competition, and involvement in the Shakespeare Schools' Festival.

KS5 exam courses

The department follows AQA (specification A; option B) for A Level Literature, and AQA English Language.

A Level Literature draws on the principles established at GCSE, looking at a range of prose, poetry and drama from across the ages, considering the importance of context, the techniques adopted by the writer, links within and between texts, and the impact on an audience or reader. Form and genre are key to teaching at this level, with pupils seeing live performances of a range of interpretations where possible.

The AQA option allows for pupils to complete a non-examined assessment, worth 20% of the final grade. This is an excellent opportunity for students to develop a sense of autonomy in their studies, and perhaps laying the foundation for higher study at university.

A Level Language encourages students to explore language across time in order to understand our changing world. Reading and writing analysis is a core aspect of the course, with a 20% non-examined assessment allowing for independent study on an aspect of the student's choice.

Functional language and its place in modern society (gender/power/socio-economic situations) are studied so that students have a thorough understanding of how language (both spoken and written) shapes our world today.

In addition, students will receive thorough teaching of grammatical, structural and contextual components of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction examples.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Aspects

English is at the heart of SMSC in many respects, primarily through the choices of texts that are taught across all year groups. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are at the core of all texts we teach since the importance of context is central to our understanding of why a piece of literature was created. This in turn encourages our pupils to have an understanding of people in times, places and situations that are very different from their own. GCSE poems such as Living Space and London afford opportunities to explicitly teach about poverty, whilst Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde allows teachers to cover aspects of religion and morality that were central to Victorian life.

Non-fiction reading texts and the speaking & listening requirement allow for a wide range of topics on modern life to be explored in a non-challenging, informative manner, whilst also looking at bias and persuasive techniques that may come into play when presenting elements of SMSC.

British Values

British Values come into play through our text choices since British literature is at the heart of the GCSE curriculum in particular.

Strands such as democracy, law, liberty, mutual respect and tolerance are themes that are intrinsic to many texts that are studied. Texts such as The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, Of Mice and Men, and To Kill a Mockingbird are all options in our Year 9 scheme of work, all of which offer messages of tolerance and mutual respect.

The Eduqas GCSE poetry anthology offers a wide range of opportunities to explore contextual factors affecting morality, democracy and liberty, and the law; whilst a Year 7 unit on fairy tales brings into question topics such as gender inequality, the law and liberty.

Concepts of Cultural Capital

The English department aims to raise the aspirations of all of our pupils through a number of teaching aspects:

- The spoken word is highly-valued in English, where pupils are encouraged to speak in a formal manner in a variety of functional situations. This may be in the relatively informal setting of a classroom discussion, or the more formal situation of an assessed presentation. This will encourage pupils of all abilities to understand the importance judging their presentation according to their desired outcomes and the expectations of a specific audience.
- The text choices across all schemes offers pupils a broad spectrum of contexts and time periods, giving them the opportunity to experience literature that challenges their own worlds, and giving an understanding of alternative lifestyles. Literature is a wonderful opportunity to show children other worlds, and as a department, we truly embrace this ideology.
- Where possible, theatre trips and external visits are being introduced in order to broaden our pupils' knowledge and opportunities. An annual 'Shakespeare at the Castle' is available to all pupils in July, regardless of ability or age. In addition, the department will offer involvement in the Shakespeare Schools' Festival and the national Poetry by Heart competition from next year in order to encourage liaison with pupils from other schools, and to take learning outside of the classroom.
- The study of English at A Level is a classic subject choice which helps to prepare students for university, presenting opportunities for research, essay writing, independent learning and formulating an argument; this in turn will aid their social mobility and future career choices.

Cross-Curricular Opportunities

Cross-curricular opportunities arise particularly with History due to the importance of a broad contextual understanding. Units on the Literature of War (Year 8), Victorian life (year 8), Early 20th Century novels (Year 9) and the Women of Shakespeare (Year 7) are particularly useful in establishing links with History. In addition, all texts at GCSE and A Level have considerable links with the teaching of History due to the assessment objective on contextual understanding.

Links with Religious Education are at the fore in English teaching when looking at aspects of morality and ethics. In addition, GCSE pupils are encouraged to debate a moral or cultural topic in their speaking and listening presentations, often drawing on their work in RE, whilst elements of human geography and demographics are covered when looking at texts on the subject of poverty and wealth (Eduqas poetry anthology).

Developments in Science –particularly during the Victorian Era- are covered in Year 8 and Year 10 when exploring texts such as Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and A Christmas Carol.

Although cross-curricular links with Mathematics is not a natural aspect of English teaching, pupils look at dates and time lines when considering how texts link together, (such as the development of poetry in the GCSE anthology. Numeracy is also important in the teaching of metre and rhyme in poetry.

Careers (Gatsby benchmark 4 coverage)

Careers is implicitly taught in English through the texts that are taught since a variety of job-types come up in the literature that we cover.

In addition, the need for formal English communication (both written and spoken) is encouraged in all lessons, and is essential for interview skills and successful employment.

We are proud of our students and their success: *(impact)*

Key Stage 4

	2017	2018	2019
Percentage of students achieving 4+ in English			
Percentage of students achieving 5+ in English			
Percentage of students achieving 7+ in English			
Average P8 for English			

Key Stage 5

	2017	2018	2019
Percentage of students achieving A*-E in English			
Percentage of students achieving A*-B in English			
Percentage of students achieving A*-A in English			