**Curriculum Information**

**Our intent:**

When someone asks: ‘Why do we study English?’, we feel the response should be easy! As a subject, we know that English is truly essential, offering ways of sensitively understanding the world around us, communicating within that world as active, global citizens and truly broadening horizons for our students to access the unique futures they want to pursue. What other subject offers the opportunity to invent an *imaginary* world, debate the issues of the *real* world, and learn from the history of a *past* world? Sometimes all in the same lesson!

In addition to all this, we believe English is a gateway to creativity and escapism. We encourage the creative freedom of our teachers and the inquisitive nature of our students, believing this approach leads to better, high-engagement teaching and learning experiences for everyone. We value the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening equally, aiming to provide opportunities for students to develop confidence in all of these within our lessons and units of work.

**The Big Picture**

We know we are preparing students for life-changing qualifications and the skills required to succeed in these underpin our curriculum and teaching. But we also value and endorse the wider benefits that studying English offers our young people, perhaps best summarised here:

*”Reading as a source of understanding and pleasure; writing as best developed by having something to say; and literature as a window to a wider human experience – who we are, how we may be and how others are interestingly different. English offers youngsters of all abilities a doorway to understanding, fulfilment and communication.” Peter Thomas -Chair of NATE*

 **KS3**

Instilling curiosity and confidence is at the heart of our KS3 curriculum and we are constantly reviewing and evaluating the relevance and engagement of our topics and units of work to suit the needs of students. As well as a broad and varied curriculum, we ensure that students build on skills and increase their level of challenge with parallel units over the course of the three years. Year 7 students start with a transition unit linked to their learning and topics from Year 6 and, by Year 9, students are starting to make the next transition to GCSE expectations, familiarising themselves with GCSE criteria and tackling GCSE-style questions and assessments.

Reading, writing and speaking and listening are all given prominence across the units in each year and all of these skills are assessed. We are excited to be introducing GCSE Media Studies next year, and building in some Media-based topics throughout our KS3 curriculum to promote digital literacy and familiarise students with this potential future subject choice.

Reading for pleasure is promoted across all year groups and, in KS3, students will often start their lessons with this activity: either reading independently or collaboratively with a shared class text. Likewise, all KS3 classes will enhance their vocabulary with key words and concepts in their lessons, as well as reflection tasks that focus on their targets and performance in assessments. Students also enjoy a fortnightly library lesson, where they can read independently and explore a range of genres, writers and forms.

**KS4**

For GCSEs, students will sit exams with AQA in English Language and English Literature.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GCSE English Language** | **GCSE English Literature** |
| * Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing
* Paper 2: Writers’ Viewpoints and Perspectives
* Spoken Language (non-exam assessment)
 | * Paper 1: Shakespeare *(Macbeth)* and the 19th century Novel *(Jekyll and Hyde)*
* Paper 2: Modern Text *(An Inspector Calls)* and Poetry
 |

The subjects are complementary, and we teach the skills for both GCSEs in tandem throughout each year, often using our study of set texts for Literature to develop the skills required for GCSE English Language as well. Students will study a range of texts spanning different time periods, genres and forms. Writing skills and opportunities to focus on extended writing are prioritised to ensure strong preparation for assessments. Speaking and listening skills are also factored in throughout the GCSE course, with students encouraged to develop confidence in self-expression and articulation of opinions, all of which enhances their written literacy and secures their Spoken Language assessment (NEA).

**KS5**

Our subjects at A Level are popular choices, offering students the opportunity to continue their studies of English Literature, delve into linguistics with A Level English Language, or take their understanding of Media Studies further. All subjects include opportunities to debate, discuss, explore and extend academic learning, as well as pursue a personal interest within the NEA projects undertaken. Each subject is taught by passionate teachers with excellent subject knowledge.

In A Level English Literature, we follow a historicist course across the literary canon from Chaucer to present day. Students are encouraged to read widely and explore the concept that no literary text stands alone. We tackle poetry, prose and drama, along with literary concepts and critical interpretations. The themes of Love through the Ages and Modern Identity remain universal and are engaging for all students who opt for this subject.

A Level English Language offers students an opportunity to explore all aspects of our language; from how children learn to speak and write to the origins of the words we continue to coin today, this is a wide-ranging course which challenges students to think forensically about words, grammar, text construction and communication.

**GCSE specification:** AQA English Language – 8700 & English Literature - 8702

**A Level English Literature specification:** AQA Literature A, 7712

**A Level English Language specification:** AQA Language, 7702