

Why is the study of English important?

English forms the basis for our development, relationships and our understanding of the world around us. The study of English is key to our personal growth and, through the development of effective written and spoken communication, it is the foundation for all our learning. The ability to communicate effectively, confidently and with clarity is crucial in school, but also in becoming an effective participant in our wider society with skills of communication being key to accessing the world of work and in navigating adult life. In a fast paced, global world the importance of fluent written and spoken English is crucial and it is essential that we develop these skills through an effective English curriculum.

From Year 7, students will be building on the foundations of the primary curriculum through a systematic exposure to a wide range of high-quality literature. We not only promote reading for enjoyment to ignite a curiosity in students, but also as a way of acquiring knowledge and exploring the world in ways that develop a student's cultural and emotional intellect. Our Secondary Reading Strategy recognises the barriers students face in accessing challenging texts such as: complexity of narrator, non-linear time sequences, complexity of story or archaic texts and encourages students to confidently explore and probe the literal and layered meanings in the texts they read. Through our curriculum we actively encourage students to develop their close reading skills so they can confidently and methodically break down the language and structure of a complex passage to establish and analyse meaning. Furthermore, in order to develop accountable and independent readers, we have designed a curriculum which requires different types or layers of reading which is supported by text dependent questions and where possible, with mastery shown through a range of writing opportunities.

As our students progress through the English curriculum, they are continually developing their close reading skills through exposure to increasingly challenging fiction and non-fiction, which include works by 19th, 20th and 21st century writers. We want our students to be able to engage with a range of texts with confidence and to develop their skills in decoding difficult texts, gathering carefully selected evidence, evaluating texts in detail and possessing the ability to explore multiple texts simultaneously to formulate and articulate personal viewpoints. The development of these skills feeds directly into their study of spoken language and the importance of verbal communication in accessing the world around them. Opportunities have been created for students to debate and discuss their ideas through a range of individual and group presentations, speeches, performing plays and reading aloud. We firmly believe that exposure to a range of opportunities builds a confidence in students and allows them to develop their life-long skills in verbal communication.

Confidence, control and accuracy in a range of writing is developed through frequent opportunities to write for a range of audiences and purposes. It is important that students use writing as an opportunity to formulate and develop their ideas and in using writing as a way to think critically about a topic and express their point of view. Across all writing activities, students are exposed to the importance of accuracy and the ability for students to construct and revise sentences for effect and impact is vital. In order to develop their skills, students are encouraged to expand their use of vocabulary through probing and investigating the nuances of language in order to enhance their written expression and clarity.

The English curriculum in our schools is robust and systematic in exposing students to effective challenge, so they can build and refine long-lasting skills for the future. Subsequently, we offer a curriculum which has appropriate challenge for all students and aims to allow students to flourish in the skills required for success in their chosen KS4 and post 16 pathways.