

Curriculum overview – ENGLISH department

Intent

The English curriculum is designed to promote the reading of challenging fiction and non-fiction which encourages students to read and explore their world and imagination. The English curriculum aims to support our students in both their literacy development and in developing a passion for English. We ensure that students have access to a wide range of high quality literary texts as a basis for reading and we nurture high quality writing skills. Our curriculum is creative, innovative and supportive. It allows students to make progress, whilst learning about the foundations of language. We also want our students to learn the importance of English and the role of articulation in the modern world.

KS3 overview

In Key Stage 3 students will explore Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening through a variety of differently themed units. These allow us to address core skills across a topic base that allows students to experience high quality literary texts and also a passion for writing. We aim to teach a range of texts and ensure that through exploring the very best writing, pupils are in a stronger position to create their own very best writing. The curriculum also has a strong social, moral, spiritual and ethical focus that uses texts to expose students to wider issues and stimulate discussion on a range of topics.

The thematic approach covers a raft of extracts from both fiction and non-fiction texts and students will learn and consolidate the key Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening skills required at Key Stage 4. A full novel is also taught in every year group giving students the experience of reading a text as a class. Thematic units are generally one per half term with the class novel taken over 10 weeks. These novels and plays continue to be supplemented with additional poetry, and extracts of fiction and non-fiction to provide a richer cultural understanding of the texts in context. They also study Shakespeare every year, interpreting his work from a literary, and dramatic, perspective, and further developing their understanding of his historical and social contexts.

All students regularly write at length, both creatively and analytically, to encourage their independent thinking, reflection and self-editing.

Themes:

The Victorians

Conflict

Mythology in Literature

Exploring other Cultures

The Gothic

The Phantasmagorical

KS4 overview

Students at Netherwood take AQA GCSE Language and Literature. Both course specifications can be found via the AQA website- www.qaqa.org/english. You will also find past exam papers and lots of other useful resources on their website.

The course is broken down into four main exam components, taken at the end of Year 11.

- English Language Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing
- English Language Paper 2 Writers' View Points and Perspectives
- English Literature Paper 1 Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel
- English Literature Paper2 Modern Texts and Poetry

The Literature text choices for students studying English at Netherwood are: Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, Lord of the Flies and Power & Conflict Poetry.

Literature exams are always taken in May and Language in early June. There are a total of four exams. Students will be supplied with an anthology of poems and access to set texts. Assessments will take place throughout the year to support preparation and revisions for the final exams.

All Literature content is delivered in Year 10. By Year 11, students will be taught two hours of literature consisting of revision and exam practice with three hours of separate Language teaching. From September in Year 11, classes will be taught Literature and Language as separate courses with some classes having different teachers for each subjects.

Stretch and challenge

The use of high level and quality texts are the main ways that the curriculum challenges the most able students. From September, the department will also offer a high-quality reading lists to students that will push them out of their current, and often limited, reading patterns and encourage them to read more widely. The curriculum also covers the teaching of higher level subject specific terminology which students can then extrapolate into their analytical writing. More advanced vocabulary and encouraging challenging vocabulary in the work students submit is also an area where the curriculum can engage higher ability students.

Enrichment opportunities

In terms of extra-curricular activities, students can access a range of lunchtime and after school sessions. The English department runs a popular book club, a poetry club, extra revision sessions for Key Stage 4 students and Debate club. In addition to this, students can experience live theatre as part of a Key Stage 3 trip to London where they visit the Globe theatre, see a performance and then spend the following day at the Harry Potter studios. Further opportunities are to be offered throughout the year.