



## **English Curriculum**

### **Statement of Intent, Implementation, Impact**

English has a pre-eminent place in education and society, meaning that all English teachers have a shared responsibility to ensure that all pupils are equipped for the demands of adulthood and the world of work. Our ethos, therefore, is for all pupils to be able to speak, read and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions in a cogent and articulate manner. However, we also recognise the importance of English as a means of developing the whole-child, in which pupils are enriched and inspired culturally, emotionally and spiritually. The school's vision and educational aims for English provision, therefore, are to provide pupils with a curriculum which is engaging, inspiring and challenging for all, regardless of starting point or ability. This aspiration is in keeping with the school's own vision of encouraging all pupils to strive for excellence in a culture which challenges and stretches them in all aspects of their lives.

Our intent is to continue to use ambitious and challenging texts to form the bedrock of a pupil's experience in this subject discipline and to foster a love for studying English. Through the teaching of such texts, we have a privileged opportunity to celebrate this country's literary heritage, to encourage a deep engagement with literary context and to nurture a love of reading that will hopefully last a lifetime. All teachers in the department have a shared vision in which all English lessons are enjoyable, inspiring, captivating and are grounded in shared real-life experiences. No child should ever be able to ask the question: 'Why do we need to know/study this?'

#### **English Education should enable pupils to:**

- Develop oracy skills to a high level, in which pupils are encouraged to verbally express themselves clearly, cogently and in a manner befitting the context.
- Develop active listening skills so that they are able to respond to others in a courteous, respectful and purposeful manner.
- Take part in formal debates so that they can explore their own viewpoints thoroughly.
- Develop inference and critical analysis skills when fostering a love of reading.
- Write accurately and imaginatively for a range of purposes and audiences, using the highest quality language and structural devices.
- Appreciate the notion that a text is the product of a specific context and authorial intent.
- Develop a repertoire of ambitious vocabulary so that pupils are equipped with the language required to express themselves in a sophisticated manner.
- Reflect upon their own social and moral viewpoints and change/alter them accordingly.
- Be passionate about the works of others as well as their own literary works.
- Make good progress regardless of starting point or social background.

English has a vital role to play in promoting SMSC and the fundamental British values within the school and these concepts are deliberately written into curriculum plans across both key stages. Studying English therefore helps to shape a pupil's sense of identity and moral standing, whilst constantly affording them the opportunity to be exposed to other opinions and ways of thinking. It moreover requires pupils to reflect upon challenging questions and concepts related to human experience and the notion of what it means to be a good human being.

A clear plan is in place for the skills that pupils should have developed by the end of Key Stage 3 in which a seamless transition from KS2 is achieved. This is made clear in the planning of all units and there is an understanding of course content and expectations which is shared by all members of staff that teach English. All pupils are expected to read, write and speak with accuracy, fluency and imagination whilst also showing a clear grasp of linguistic convention and grammar. Pupils should complete Key Stage 3 having honed all of the skills necessary for success at GCSE and having established a solid foundation of knowledge that will contribute towards a more a seamless transition to our challenging Key Stage 4 curriculum. All forms of assessment are designed deliberately to ensure that the jump from KS2 to KS4 is gradual and manageable yet also challenging. More structured and broken-down forms of questioning / task setting are deployed in Year 7 which become less and less scaffolded as pupils progress through their school years.

At the time of writing this, the department has a Transition Coordinator whose responsibility is to communicate with feeder primary schools so that there is a shared understanding of where our pupils are at the end of KS2 and where we want them to be by the end of Year 11. By forging even stronger links, we hope to ensure that all pupils make good progress which is not impeded by poor planning and unrealistic expectations.

In addition, amendments made at KS3 have resulted in a far more knowledge-rich curriculum where pupils are explicitly taught about cultural capital in relation to literary movements and genres (all of which is vital for eventual success at GCSE). For example, a new Victorian Literature unit has been designed in Year 9 that enhances the pupils' understanding of society at the time and how this helped shape Victorian literature. Another example which focuses on improving the pupils' cultural capital is the coverage of the Romantic movement in poetry in which pupils are encouraged to think about how social thinking at the time affected the appearance and content of the subsequent poetic forms.

The department continues to live by the mantra that all pupils are capable of excellence, regardless of starting point or ability. In order to enable pupils to achieve this, we must continue to be aware of those pupils who are in need of additional support, whether this be due to SEN issues, lower-than-expected reading ages or pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. All pupils in Year 7 are tested to establish reading age scores and those pupils who have fallen behind are given personalised support by members of the SEN department. This involves diagnostic testing to establish specific areas of weakness, and personalised tuition which seeks to bridge these gaps (Thinking Reading).

All teachers are made aware of who their SEN and PP pupils are on department tracking sheets and class lists and all teachers are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that any obstacles to learning are removed. This can be anything from ensuring that specific pupil needs are catered for during lessons to the use of Pupil Premium funding to pay for resources and trips that would otherwise be unavailable to some pupils. Such labels should never be an excuse for underachievement and the department continues to maintain the highest standards and ambitions for all pupils we teach and nurture. Close tracking of such pupils continues to be a cornerstone of the department's success with timely intervention being implemented when necessary.

## Implementation

At Key Stage 3, pupils have 3 one hour lessons per week, all taught by subject specialists; at Key Stage 4, pupils experience 4 one hour lessons a week across both years of study, again all taught by subject specialists. All pupils are entered for the GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature qualifications and the current model means that the KS4 English curriculum accounts for 16% of the school curriculum which is in line with national expectations.

The members of the department continue to receive CPD for new initiatives and ways of teaching the new GCSE specifications. This has taken the form of external courses in which members of staff are expected to share resources and concepts upon their return, or internal training organised by the Head of Department. Keeping constantly abreast of new pedagogies and schools of thought is essential for continued development and all members of the department are passionate about evolving as top-class practitioners.

Members of the department are also encouraged to remain innovative by reading up-to-date academic literature. In addition to the book which is handed out to all staff at the beginning of the academic year, English teachers are also given a subject-specific text to guide their practice in the classroom. The content of these texts helps to guide work scrutiny sessions, joint planning meetings and internal CPD and forms an important component of each teacher's development.

The English Key Stage 3 curriculum is designed in such a manner that all of the skills necessary for success at GCSE are practiced and honed throughout the pupils' initial three years of study. All assessments are designed with this in mind in which all skills are assessed against the GCSE criteria; however, deliberate structuring and scaffolding is used lower down school to ensure that all assessments are accessible (yet still suitably challenging) to all pupils. This allows the department to more effectively track progress over time by using the same language to assess from Year 7 all the way through to the end of Year 11. Units are sequenced in a deliberate way, ensuring that all pupils cover course content which is in line and proportionate with the GCSE syllabuses. Each yearly programme of study affords pupils the chance to critically read a range of challenging text types and to write creatively for a range of purposes and audiences.

In addition to this, all Key Stage 3 classes study a number of age-appropriate class readers throughout the year which are studied alongside that half term's unit of work. This provides pupils with constant exposure to quality texts and encourages them to remain in the habit of reading for pleasure. The class reader lesson also coincides with a fortnightly visit to the library across all Key Stage 3 classes, meaning that borrowing from the school library remains high. The class reader lesson is used to explicitly teach critical reading skills which are essential for GCSE Language and Literature.

All English teachers routinely check pupils' understanding of topics throughout the course of study. Starter activities as well as whiteboard tasks are recurrently used to ascertain knowledge and misconceptions and there is an expectation that teachers teach in a pro-active and responsive manner as a result of this information. All members of the department are in the habit of employing engaging and impactful questioning techniques and the use of quality feedback – whether it be written or verbal – continues to form an important component of a pupil's experiences in their English lessons.

The department continues to place considerable focus on improving the long-term memory of pupils, subsequently leading them towards greater mastery of the skills and topics we cover.

All teachers routinely use spacing and interleaving to ensure that pupils are constantly refamiliarizing themselves with prior content, consequently strengthening memories and the ability to recall vital information. We have a clear ethos that no time should be wasted in an English lesson, and so all teachers routinely employ engaging and thought-provoking entry activities and starter tasks which require pupils to engage as soon as they step foot in the classroom.

Another important mantra within the department is that it is vital to keep pupils constantly immersed in quality exemplar work. All teachers routinely model responses for pupils - whether they be pre-prepared by the teacher, are examples of previous pupils' work or are co-constructed within a lesson. These effective modelling strategies ensure that all pupils have the very highest expectations of themselves and are challenged to craft quality work which they can be proud of. Moreover, modelling continues to be a valuable and time-efficient way of providing pupils with precise, timely feedback and must continue to be a cornerstone of effective English teaching at Broughton.

The teaching of subject-specific vocabulary and tier two words is explicit within English. All schemes of learning contain key vocabulary that is to be covered as part of a given unit. These words are appropriate for both the topic and the age of the pupils and additionally contain suggestions for extension vocabulary that will stretch our highest achievers. Words are power and we want all of our pupils to be equipped with the linguistic skills needed to achieve. Moreover, the Head of Key Stage 3 is responsible for nominating a 'Word of the Week' which is used across all year groups and all subject disciplines. Bedrock Learning is a new platform that we are currently launching with Year 9 and Year 7 which looks at the explicit teaching and quizzing of tier 2 vocabulary. If this trial is deemed successful, there is the possibility of launching this with other years groups in the future.

Assessment within English continues to take a number of different forms. Progress testing occurs on entry in Year 7 in which reading and spelling capabilities are determined for all pupils. This is invaluable for determining which pupils are in need of intervention so that we can close the gap as early as possible in collaboration with the school's SEN department. All pupils are then assessed on a half-termly basis in which they have one extensive piece of work formally marked (reading / writing or speaking and listening). Marks are recorded on the department's internal tracking grids and intervention within lessons continues to be an ongoing process. All teachers routinely follow up assessments with a feedback lesson in which pupils are provided with specific ways in which they can make progress. DIRT is afforded to all pupils in which they are required to use a purple pen to showcase the progress that they have in response to the teacher's feedback. However, assessment for learning continues to be a staple of the English curriculum in which teachers constantly use their knowledge of the class to inform future planning and course delivery.

### **A focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar:**

The accuracy of written expression remains a key focus in all English lessons and all pupils are explicitly taught and routinely tested on important aspects of the written form. Our marking policy is based upon the principle that quality written expression is paramount and all members of the department use the same set of codes to provide feedback on the errors that a pupil is making. DIRT time remains a cornerstone of the department's approach to feedback where pupils routinely use purple pen to make amendments and corrections in their work. In both key stages, pupils are taught to use a variety of sentence forms and structures and are also instructed how to use a range of punctuation for effect

### **Writing:**

Throughout their time at Broughton, all pupils are exposed to a number of different writing styles and genres. All pupils study a breadth of fiction and non-fiction texts and are required to craft their own pieces accordingly. Members of the department frequently use professionally written examples as a way of inspiring and motivating our pupils whilst also encouraging them to challenge themselves linguistically. Teachers routinely encourage pupils to re-draft work during DIRT time and exemplary pieces are frequently celebrated in the school newsletter / Top Button publications. The department also runs a number of internal and external writing competitions throughout the year as a means of fostering a love of creative writing and celebrating excellence.

### **Reading:**

All pupils are exposed to a number of age-appropriate and challenging texts as a means of broadening their cultural capital. These may take the form of extracts that are studied as part of units of work or the class readers that pupils study throughout the academic year. The department continues to place great store by wider reading and all pupils at Broughton are required to fill in a reading log which documents their reading habits. In addition to this, the department continues to invest money in the latest book releases, ensuring that all English teachers enjoy a breadth of choice when choosing a book to study with their classes. A number of the texts studied explore different cultures to their own, therefore affording pupils the opportunities to study different cultures to their own. Moreover, all pupils in KS3 have a timetabled fortnightly library visit, ensuring that the opportunity to read for pleasure and to borrow books is available to all. During lessons, all pupils are encouraged to read aloud as a means of achieving fluency and accuracy – anyone who seems to struggle in this aspect of reading is flagged up to the SEN department for further diagnostic testing.

### **Speaking and listening:**

Speaking and listening continues to form an integral part of all English lessons. All pupils are encouraged to speak in an academic and formal manner which is in keeping with our belief that 'good writing floats on a sea of talk'. Cooperative learning strategies are frequently employed as a means of promoting structured, quality discussion, and such initiatives are subsequently used to feed in to a written response. In addition to this, the department frequently takes part in formal debates and presentations (internal and external) as a way of encouraging pupils to discover their own voices and to express themselves within a formal setting.

### **The essential ingredients of English lessons at Broughton might include:**

- In-depth, mature enquiry and discussion
- Use of whiteboards to encourage a participative approach and establish any misconceptions
- Cooperative learning strategies (Kagan structures)
- Quality modelling and co-writing class responses
- Low-stakes testing and interleaving
- Quality questioning and explanation of challenging concepts
- Teaching being responsive to the needs of pupils
- Metacognitive reasoning during class discussions

## **Impact**

Results at GCSE continue to show that achievement and progress in English is high. The 2019 GCSE results, for example, show that almost 95% of pupils achieved a standard pass (Grade 4+) in English whilst almost 42% achieved the highest grades of a 7-9. Both figures are considerably higher than national averages proving that the teaching of English at Broughton is both inspiring and impactful. Furthermore, we constantly reflect upon the AQA analysis of exam performance to evolve as practitioners and use this information to enhance provision for our pupils. Internal monitoring of pupils continues to play a key role in this as teachers are able to closely track the progress of their pupils and intervene where necessary. For the last few years, for example, the department has used a weekly intervention slot as a means of supporting those pupils who need additional one-to-one tuition. This initiative has proven to be highly successful with the vast majority of pupils selected going on to achieve the grade needed to commence their college qualifications.

The English department continues to foster an enjoyment and curiosity of the subject. The leadership within the department continues to place particular emphasis on selecting the very best texts to engage and interest our pupils. Keeping abreast of new releases as well as new technologies is a vital way of keeping the subject fresh and relevant; however, we also understand the benefits and importance of celebrating our diverse and fascinating literary heritage so that pupils are able to see the importance that texts play within society. Pupils are always encouraged to share their opinions of the texts that they study and the department uses this information to determine which texts are received most favourably by the pupils.

Pupil voice continues to inform our planning and feedback from questionnaires proves that our pupils enjoy the subject and believe that they are taught well. We use such information to ascertain the most effective teaching and revision strategies and to enhance the most popular course content. Cooperative learning strategies continue to be popular with our pupils and the use of quality teacher modelling and explanation continues to be some of our most valued practice. We have also noted how many of our pupils enjoy an element of choice within lesson, and this has, in part, led to the department devising credit-based homework projects in which pupils can choose the tasks they wish to complete.

The department continues to place great importance on extra-curricular activities and currently has a poetry club and reading club. Moreover, the department continues to organise teams for formal debates and organises theatre trips as a means of bringing texts to life for the pupils. Every year we enter teams for the 'Big Book Quiz' and often organise visits from celebrated authors. All events are always well attended, proving the levels of enjoyment that our pupils experience. Starting in July 2019, the department has also strengthened links with local colleges and have organised workshops aimed at providing pupils with a better insight into the content of A Level English courses. We continue to use pupil reaction to such initiatives as a valuable way of gleaning the thoughts and opinions of our pupils and we are keen to continue providing educational experiences which enrich and inspire our pupils.

As an English department, the moderation of pupil work continues to be an important aspect of our work. Moderation now takes place at both key stages and is a means of ensuring consistency of marking across the department and quality assuring the work that is scrutinised. A comparison of the departmental tracking grids with final GCSE results proves that all members of the department are able to mark accurately, subsequently allowing us to accurately determine which pupils are in need of additional support. Work sampling sessions are also held at various points in the year as a way of firstly ensuring that the curriculum intent is being met and secondly as a way of ensuring that there is a consistency of approach and standard across the department. Such sessions, furthermore, provide members of staff

with an opportunity to discuss their individual approaches to teaching which can subsequently be adopted by other members of the team to good effect.

Routine work sampling reveals that feedback is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes. The use of purple pen is now a deeply embedded strategy within the department and continues to showcase the progress that pupils make as a result of the feedback they are given. Furthermore, such sampling highlights a consistency of teaching and learning approaches and a consistency of standard regarding pupil work. As a result, all members of the department appear to share the same vision of excellence that we have for all pupils.

### **Covid Curriculum:**

The English Department has made a conscious effort to maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning during the country's lockdown period and its subsequent shift to online learning. All members of the team are able to use Microsoft Teams to good effect and have continued to receive training to inform their lesson planning. The levels of engagement across all years were exemplary meaning that pupils did not fall behind with course content. This is also means that any pupil who is now absent from school whilst isolating can be provided for effectively.

However, it was decided that moving some of the KS3 units around would be of benefit. For example, Romeo and Juliet (Year 9), Our Day Out (year 8) and Oliver Twist (Year 7), were moved towards the end of the year, meaning that we could teach the texts in a classroom environment. Units which lend themselves more towards the teaching of stand-alone lessons took their place, meaning that a pupil who had missed a previous lesson was not immediately disadvantaged and unable to fully engage with the next lesson. In the case of Year 7, we studied nature poetry, in Year 8 we started the 'Heroes' unit and in Year 9 we moved our 'Suffering and Survival' unit forwards but tweaked it to focus more on inspiring stories of hope and persistence. All assessments still took place as usual and scores were recorded on the department tracking sheet. This sheet suggests that the completion of assessments was consistent (with very few pupils not submitting work) and the marks were in line with previous years.

In order to better support our pupils to catch up with their progress, however, we have undertaken the following two initiatives:

- A tutoring programme for pupils identified as having fallen behind - aimed at small group provision in English (one-to-three)
- The Bedrock Vocabulary platform was made available to all Year 7 pupils as a means of enriching their linguistic repertoires.

All members of the department will continue to track the progress of every pupil they teach, using effective intervention strategies where appropriate.

**May 2021**