

Curriculum Principles

Our curriculum has been carefully thought through, and to ensure that all students develop holistically, we have designed and planned our curriculum according to the following principles:

Our curriculum is **ambitious**, offering all students access to the most powerful knowledge of each subject

For example:

Shakespeare is a key pillar of English teaching in the UK. The National Curriculum states that students should study 2 different Shakespeare texts in Ks3. We study 3. This is because studying Shakespeare promotes high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and helps to develop their love of literature. Students can look to Shakespeare to better understand the nature of humanity. Texts are chosen to support each year's key foci: Year 7 explores how characters change in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', Year 8 explores the three subplots in 'The Tempest' and Year 9 explore how themes link to characters and plot in 'Romeo and Juliet'. All of these texts support students' understanding and prepare them for 'Macbeth' which is studied in Year 10 as part of their GCSE Literature course.

Our curriculum is **taught to be remembered**, not merely encountered, through curriculum content that is **well sequenced** and vertically integrated

For example:

In Year 7, the main focus of the English Curriculum is character development. In Term 1, students study the novel 'Oliver Twist'. Students develop the skill of making pertinent What Points about characters. This is developed in Term 2 where they are expected to make alternative What Points, using adverbials, about characters in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. In Term 3, students develop this further by evaluating the effectiveness of the What Points that they use when studying non-human characters in poetry.

In Year 8, the main focus of the English Curriculum is plot development. Students are expected to recall the work they did in Year 7 regarding What Points and now expand on this by supporting these points with evidence, in the form of quotations, in Term 1, embedding these quotations in Term 2 and supporting with a range of quotations in Term 3.

In Year 9, the main focus of the English Curriculum is the development of themes. Students are expected to recall the analysis work they did in years 7 and 8 and then develop it further by focusing on writers' choices. In Term 1, students are supported with developing their ability to explore author intent after making effective What Points that are fully supported with evidence. In Term 2, students develop this further by exploring reader response. Finally, in Term 3, students compare writers' intentions by bringing all of the skills from Year 7 into Year 9 together.

Our curriculum embodies our **vision and ethos** through educating for knowledge, wisdom and skills, educating for hope and aspiration, educating for community and living well together, and educating for dignity and respect

For example:

In English, our academy's vision and ethos is predominantly explored through the Literature texts that we study. For example, in Year 9, Term 1, students study the novella 'Of Mice and Men'. There has been a lot of controversy over the studying of this text but we believe that due to the diversity of our students that it really supports the work that we do in supporting our students with living well together, respect and hope. We explore the theme of racism - especially white privilege, sexism, agism and loneliness.

In Year 10, in Term 2, students study the play 'An Inspector Calls'. The play explores the theme of social responsibility by using the inspector to confront each character about their responsibility in the death of Eva Smith. However, the playwright also wants the audience/reader to understand that all actions have consequences and that it is impossible to live in isolation.

Our curriculum promotes the **spiritual development** of all students

For example:

Often in English lessons, spiritual development is explored through the exploration of the characters actions in the texts we have chosen. This can be seen in Year 8 Term 3, when we study a range of poetry from different cultures. One poem in particular is called 'Vultures'. It explores the theme of good v evil through the character of a commandant at Belsen Concentration Camp. The poem explores the character as a loving father that buys his children chocolate whilst on his way home after ordering the deaths of many Jews. They are given opportunities to debate the duality of this character and to debate if a character can really be described as good if they do evil acts.

In Year 9, in Term 4, Year 9 students study 'Conflict Poetry' where characters' actions link to real life events that occurred in wars across many decades and centuries. In 'War Photographer', the character explores the dilemma he has in making money out of other people's misery. Students are given opportunities to debate how external conflicts can cause internal conflicts and how individuals deal with that.

Our curriculum develops students' **21st century learning skills**, and is underpinned by a **literacy strategy** that supports increased vocabulary acquisition and reading fluency

For example:

The development of literacy skills unpins everything that we do in English Lessons.

In Year 7, however, we have taken this a step further by providing all students with bespoke Reading Development Lessons.. Students are grouped according to their reading ages to support their specific needs with reading - focussing on their decoding, fluency and comprehension. Our very weakest readers, or students new to the country, are supported with phonics development and have additional reading intervention from our reading support assistant and/or EAL teacher.

Throughout Key Stage 3, students have access to class readers in addition to the focused texts that they are studying in depth. These novels are read more quickly and nearly always by the class teacher. Students can understand material above their reading level when their only task is to listen. When they don't have to be concerned about things like taking turns reading or pronouncing tricky words, their comprehension improves. Listening to books builds vocabulary and aids understanding of expression.