

English and Drama – Position Statement

Context

The department is made up of a Head of Department (teaching KS4 English and Drama), two full-time specialists on a reduced timetable with SLT responsibilities, two full-time specialists (one on maternity-leave for most of this academic year and one a second year ECT), two part-time specialists (one ECT) and two part-time non-specialists. The necessary English maternity cover is being taught by a specialist English teacher, appointed on a fixed-term one-year contract, teaching Music and English. Therefore, three new staff joined the department this academic year.

There are four teaching classrooms in the English area and, as a result of timetabling changes this year, two GCSE English groups are taught in Maths classrooms and other KS3 groups are taught in up to five different classrooms over the two-week timetable. GCSE Drama classes are taught in the Drama studio.

Curriculum

Pupils at KS3 are taught English in mixed ability groups and have 6 hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable. Due to timetabling restrictions, there are shared teaching groups in Years 7, 8 and 9. Each teacher in KS3 has free choice of SOWs to deliver the *National Curriculum* – all resources are available in the English CRL. Teachers are free to decide the order of curriculum delivery and the

KS3 texts. Each year group must study:

- *Reading – novel, poetry, play*
- *Writing: fiction and non-fiction*
- *Speaking and listening: drama and group / pair / individual presentations*

The *Accelerated Reading Programme* is a key focus in Year 7 & Year 8, with regular quizzing and termly STAR testing an established process to support and promote wider reading. Similarly, fortnightly library lessons are an important part of the curriculum. The silent reading time at the beginning of KS3 lessons is also a recognised routine / process / culture within the department. Reading is set as an ongoing, weekly homework for Years 7 & 8.

There is no discrete Drama provision in KS3 but teachers of English as part of their KS3 curriculum provide opportunities for Drama lessons in response to plays, novels and poetry studied.

In Years 10 and 11, pupils have 7 or 8 hours of English curriculum time across the two-week timetable. All pupils are taught in mixed ability sets in KS4 and all pupils take *Pearson Edexcel's English Language and Literature* GCSEs, prioritising group dynamics to enable a positive working environment. At GCSE level teachers follow the same curriculum:

Year 10:

- *Language Paper 1 & Literature Paper*
- *Reading – 'A Christmas Carol', Conflict poetry, 'Journey's End' and start 'Macbeth'*
- *Writing: fiction and non-fiction*
- *Speaking and listening: individual presentations*

Year 11:

- *Language Papers 1 & 2, Literature Papers 1 & 2: Exam preparation (completing Macbeth and Conflict Poetry and preparing for Unseen Poetry). Revision for all papers.*

There is no discrete Drama provision in KS3. Pupils have 5 hours of curriculum time across a two-week timetable for GCSE Drama. Pupils follow AQA's GCSE Drama curriculum:

- *Year 10: Acting skills, Performance Spaces and Roles and Responsibilities, The Crucible: Performing and exam preparation, Devised: preparation and Section 1 Drama Log.*
- *Year 11: Devised: Section 2 and 3 Drama Logs and Acting assessment, studying a Live Performance, Scripted Performance to AQA examiner and preparing for the written exam.*

Collaborative planning within INSET, Department meetings and gained time, is an ongoing review process to ensure that changes are made in relation to curriculum, cohort and teaching staff.

Assessment

All exam-style written assessments, at both KS3 and KS4, are modelled on aspects of the English Language and Literature GCSEs. Scaffolding is included where appropriate and GCSE mark schemes and use exam board marks schemes, simplified for ease of access for our pupils if appropriate. In both KS3 and KS4, the department agrees key assessment tasks and conditions. Data from summative assessments is recorded and frequently reviewed both by individual teachers and collectively to enable timely and appropriate interventions.

Formative assessment regularly takes place. Pupils use record sheets in the front of their folders to ensure that all significant tasks, marks / grades and targets are recorded to understand how they are performing and how they can improve. In addition, verbal, whole class feedback is a strategy that the department employs.

Assessment data is recorded termly on SIMS, in addition to the dedicated department spreadsheets. The data is used to track progress and inform interventions / referrals to SENDCO / testing / contact with HOY and home if there are any concerns.

All GCSE results are included in the DDP and help to inform any departmental targets for the following academic year.

Teaching and Learning

The department takes an autonomous approach to pedagogy according to group and tasks. Pupils benefit from tailored teaching and this is promoted and celebrated within the department. Teachers are empowered, as professionals, to develop different methodologies and to share good practice within the Department. Pupils benefit from a variety of teaching styles and extensive teaching expertise and create a positive working environment, fostering inclusivity and engagement.

Within lessons, pupils work independently, in pairs and in groups, depending on tasks undertaken and pupils are comfortable to ask and answer questions and share ideas.

Teachers incorporate differentiation into their lessons using a variety of strategies and resources, ensuring that pupils are aware of learning objectives and success criteria. Effective questioning is a strength of the Department and is key feature of lessons. PowerPoints, worksheets, multimedia resources and modelling are used within lessons to facilitate learning.

Teachers benefit from TAs in some lessons, in order to support pupils with additional needs and value the continuity of regular support for these pupils.

Enrichment

This year, select pupils in Year 9 participated in a writing workshop delivered by a published work, focused on a theme of *'Place'*.

Selected pupils in KS3 take part in the annual *Carnegie Book Award* challenge and attend the *Hay Literary Festival* to foster a love of reading.

When suitable opportunities arise, pupils are given the chance to attend theatre visits to inspire a love of live theatre. We support theatres within the West Midlands: Malvern, Cheltenham, Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Pupils are also given the opportunity to be involved on and backstage in plays and musicals, allowing collaboration with pupils from different year groups.