



SHIRLEY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

Our Vision:

To develop aspirational learners who strive for excellence academically, creatively and culturally, benefitting from a wide range of opportunities led by inspirational educators.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Intent of the curriculum:

Our curriculum aims to consolidate, nurture and build on skills and knowledge students have acquired at each key stage encouraging students to master their communication, reading, writing and critical thinking skills. The English curriculum at Shirley is culturally rich and diverse, encouraging students to thrive both personally and academically. Students will study a three-year KS3 programme supporting our ethos of ensuring all our students experience a broad and varied curriculum. The English learning journey allows for students at KS4 and 5 to master their language capacity, continue to discover the wealth of their Literary Heritage and evolving critical abilities to evaluate wider concepts and ideas explored in literary works. The English department not only prepares students for their chosen ventures beyond Shirley but provides them with the necessary skills and experiences they need in order to integrate and engage in wider society.

At KS3 students receive eight fifty-minute lessons per fortnight. In year 7 students will study a programme based on the theme of Different Voices through which students will begin to discover and admire the fascinating world of literature. Year 7 allows students to consolidate skills and knowledge learnt at KS2 as well as provide a solid foundation and awareness of the shared cultural heritage in a range of literary forms. In year 8 we deliver a programme of study based on theme of Diversity and Inclusion through which students will learn about and celebrate who they are and where they come from, but also appreciate the diverse cultures and historical backgrounds that have shaped our communities in 21st century Britain. In year 9 we deliver a programme of study based on the theme of Power through which students will begin to discover and question ideas to do with the nature of man and the representation, incarnation and manifestations of key concepts to do with power in literature. Throughout key stage 3 students will develop their written and oral communication skills. Student will develop their ability to specify audience, devise an argument and explain the relevance of contextual factors in various literary works. Students will also develop their reading skills through an exploration of fiction and non-fiction texts enhancing their analytical skills through a detailed and rigorous examination of texts and spoken language. Students will be taught and encouraged to use a wealth of vocabulary equipping them with an advanced level of vocabulary and language skills to write, speak and read with clarity and precision.

Students will begin studying the AQA GCSE language and literature syllabus in year 10 with over eight hours of lessons a fortnight. For their GCSEs students will explore a range of literary ideas and concepts in greater depth building on the knowledge gained at KS3. Students will be taught classic literature: a 19th century novel, Shakespeare, a 20th century play and a collection of poetry exploring Power & Conflict. As a department we make clear links between language and literature that allows for interleaving and continual reference to skills and knowledge needed for both courses. The GCSE curriculum builds on experiences in KS3 and develops and refines those skills in preparation for meaningful choices for students beyond their GCSE studies. Students at KS4 will advance their reading, writing and spoken language skills empowering them to deal with the complexities and challenges of post-16 education.

The A level literature and language courses enable students to become independent analysts. Students build confidence and master the ability to analyse writers craft and genre in depth as well as learn how to effectively manipulate language for their own purposes. Both the A level English language and literature course equip students with higher order thinking skills allowing them to evaluate, explore and challenge critical theorists thus providing them with a greater insight and perspective of the world.

Our curriculum at Shirley goes beyond what is taught in the classroom and examinable. In studying English, we want our students to acquire knowledge about our collective British culture and heritage but also



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celebrate the cultures, religions and ethnicities that have helped shape contemporary Britain. In our study of Poems from Other Cultures in Year 7, for instance we show our students creative approaches to writing about their own cultures and backgrounds as well as seeing how contemporary writers evoke a sense of themselves in their poems. Our curriculum is designed to help our learners connect with their communities, appreciate and participate in them, creating culturally aware individuals. Through the study of English our students not only gain knowledge of the linguistic and literary contexts in which literature is written but are also encouraged to learn about the social, cultural and historical contexts that have influenced writers and their works. In our study of Diverse Shorts in year 8 we promote critical thinking challenging students to evaluate key concepts and ideas some of these being democracy, identity, justice and change.

For students to fully appreciate and understand the complexities of English as a subject we have included a range of diverse texts by BAME writers and texts that explore the dynamics of BAME protagonists in our KS3 curriculum. In doing so our students learn to treat each other with dignity, courtesy and respect but also how fiction and non-fiction texts reflect and convey different worldviews and experiences. This is done through discussions about texts, by relating themes and ideas to the experiences of our learners as well as seeking opportunities to make our studied texts relevant to their lives. We understand what we do in the classroom either promotes or destabilises our students' growing sense of identity; we therefore ensure we create a safe and effective classroom environment in promoting open and critical discussion and that staff and students likewise are aware of their collective responsibility in impacting and forming each other's sense of self and belonging. Our curriculum has been designed in a way that students are able to make cross-curricular links with other subjects. For example, students in year 7 study Shakespeare's plays in our unit Voices on the Stage at the same time they study Early modern Britain in history. Our thematic approach to the KS3 curriculum encourages students to retrieve and make connections between literary form, genre, texts and ideas from KS3-5. This encourages plentiful thinking ensuring students are able to question, critique and evaluate both written and spoken language.

Implementation:

The English department encompass a holistic approach to the study of English, catering to students' individual personas and unique learning styles. Our curriculum at Key Stage Three is based around thematic concepts with a core focus on the progression of skills and knowledge over time supporting the National Curriculum at KS3. At Key Stage Three our programme of study and medium-term plans ensure students study a scope of literary texts and genres; these focus on challenge, retrieval practise, interleaving and literacy. Students at Key Stage Three will study a range of literary genres and text types; these will be taught through a springboard method whereby students will be taught to make connections and links between writers' ideas, context, themes and literary genres. In year 7 we build on the knowledge and skills taught at KS2. Each unit of work encompasses a range of reading, writing and spoken language skills.

Our programme of study in year 7 is all about exploring English through creativity. KS3 is all about consolidating and cementing key skills and knowledge such as inference, reading for meaning, retrieving information, narrative writing, exploring poetic form and non-fiction writing. The English curriculum covers different areas of reading and writing across each year and Key Stage. Students will continue to revise and recap prior knowledge and skills gained at KS3 when they begin their study of GCSE English language and literature in year 10. The use of retrieval and interleaving practise throughout KS4 ensures that key skills and knowledge of English are secure. At KS5 students further develop the skills and knowledge gained when they begin to challenge interpretations and theorists developing their analytical and evaluative skills mastering the ability to consider alternate interpretations. As a department we engage with and apply real life contexts where applicable and always promote and encourage our students to work independently and collaboratively.



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Throughout their study of each unit of work students are encouraged to relate the knowledge and ideas learnt and discussed to their contemporary society for example the evolution of language and its various uses and effects and the social and historical context of texts and how these have helped shape the literary canon and modern Britain. We want our students to enrich their understanding of literary heritage; we therefore encourage our students to watch range of documentaries, films, visit art galleries and museum exhibitions facilitating and developing their cultural capital. As a department we firmly believe in the importance of not only written communication but also the importance in promoting oracy at all levels. Our students are taught how to communicate fluently and effectively. In English we encourage whole class debates and group presentations and teach students how to adapt and manipulate language, voice and tone dependent on audience and purpose. Students are also encouraged to take part in writing competitions (Young Writers) and public speaking competitions (Jack Petchey) building on their written and oral communication skills. Homework is set in line with each unit of study across all Key Stage groups encouraging independent study and research around topics studied during curriculum time.

Students are assessed using both formative and summative assessments once a half term. Formative assessments comprise of a retrieval practise quiz testing students' knowledge across a unit(s) of study. This is followed by a yellow box marking piece where misconceptions of knowledge and skills are addressed. At the end of each half term students will complete a summative assessment followed by directed improvement and reflection time where students redraft their work empowering students to take ownership of their learning. In year 7 and 8 assessments take the form of reading comprehension tasks followed by a short writing task and in year 9 students complete a controlled assessment. At KS4 and 5 students complete practise AQA exam style questions preparing them for the rigours of GCSE and A level public examinations.

Impact:

Through the study of English students are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge they need in order to pursue both higher education and a career of their choosing. The quality of teaching and learning in English ensures that students are provided with regular feedback in lessons in the form of both verbal and written feedback. Regular retrieval of information allows students to embed information in their long-term memory enabling them with the cognitive abilities to be able to complete tasks effectively and independently. Half-termly assessments and directed improvement reflection time means that students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their GCSE and A level public examinations. At Shirley students study a diverse range of texts and literature encouraging them to appreciate, empathise and embrace our cultural diversity that has formed modern day Britain as well as succeed in their personal and professional lives beyond Shirley. Students leave Shirley having learnt to and value language as a means of crafting one's ideas, thoughts and beliefs, develop their critical thinking, analytical and evaluative skills as well as their creative expertise to either ask or challenge life's greatest questions.

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We want all at SHS to believe in and maintain the values of our school:

