

## **Curriculum Intent - English**

English is a subject which impacts upon everyone's life on a daily basis: from the moment that we first pick up a book or pen, we are faced with a world in which texts and the ability to communicate are primary determiners for the quality of life we lead. At Horizon we endeavour to create a curriculum which encourages a true love of texts, alongside the development of such communication skills as will allow the young people of Barnsley to be able to flourish. The scope and importance of English stretches far beyond the classrooms where it is taught as a discrete subject; it underpins so much of what occurs within the confines of Horizon and, as such, we ensure that we promote and teach high levels of literacy and oracy so that students can then use these vital tools in all other elements of their lives, academic and otherwise. A life-long love of books is cultivated alongside a life-defining ability to truly engage with and use language in a wide range of real-life contexts.

Seizing the linguistic baton from KS2, students will enjoy a five-year English curriculum which develops verbal confidence through speaking and listening skills, written competency through the systematic mastery of a set of fifteen skills divided equally across Reading, Writing and Literature, and the cumulative growth of a pupil's cultural capital through the exposure to carefully-selected texts and topics which prepare young people to challenge and embrace the pertinent social and moral issues they face in the twenty-first century. We aim to ensure that when students depart Horizon for the final time, they do so, not as passive recipients of a text, but rather as confident masters of language.

Skills, knowledge and cultural capital are the key drivers in the design of our English KS3 curriculum to ensure that students leave Year Nine fully prepared for the intensity of their GCSE Literature and Language courses. The study of a range of engaging texts, both modern and classic, are embedded within these three years to ensure that students are endowed with a depth and breadth of variety, to both encourage a love of reading and to develop a burgeoning wealth of cultural capital which will stand them in good stead for KS4 and, more generally, adult life. Writing, Reading and Literature are divided into five essential skills for each area; these are then built upon and secured throughout the duration of KS3. Subject content and skills continually build upon previous learning so that students should always be aware of where they are on their lower school English learning journey and, more importantly, exactly why they are currently studying what they are studying.

In Reading, we have paired texts in each year group which complement each other thematically, so that students are immersed in different cultural contexts and challenged by issues and concepts which will allow them to develop as individuals, such as society's unhealthy obsession with aesthetic appearance in 'Face' following on in Year Seven from exploring themes of changing identity and moral standpoint in 'A Christmas Carol', and themes of racism and social deprivation in 'Of Mice And Men' being linked to social norms and the immigrant experience in 'A View from the Bridge' in Year Nine. Writing incorporates the crafting of both creative narratives and discursive opinion-based writing (linked back and referenced vertically across schemes) and writing competitions are run regularly which are matched to class content – our participation in local and national events

encourages students to independently extend their learning and channel their enthusiasm for the subject into a genuine love of English which will stretch far beyond Horizon's walls. Literature encompasses the study of a Shakespearean text alongside an in-depth analysis of a linked narrative poem in each year group, alongside which other related poems can then be incorporated. When students reach the end of Year Nine, they find themselves in a position where they have mastered the skills needed to be successful in KS4 and can then begin to apply these judiciously when engaging with the GCSE course content.

Our KS4 course is split into two interwoven stages, using the AQA GCSE specification for both Language and Literature: the engagement and teaching of Literature content (Romeo and Juliet, Jekyll and Hyde, Power and Conflict Anthology Poetry and Animal Farm), alongside the writing skills for the Language qualification, across Year Ten, followed by an intensive coverage of the reading skills needed to succeed in English Language in the autumn term of Year Eleven, before the final post-Christmas summation involving the mastery of skills already taught in both subjects. We are committed to guiding pupils into becoming active and critical participants in contemporary society, and we have, therefore, striven in our choice of GCSE texts to expose pupils to writers whose works and ideas address fundamental, universal and timeless themes. Thus our GCSE students are immersed in an engaging richness of characterisation, language and (often interlinked) ideas that allow them to appreciate the social critiques of the worlds that Shakespeare, Stevenson and Orwell found themselves in during their respective years of publication (1595, 1885 and 1945). This also complements the study undertaken in other subjects across the college curriculum, for instance that of the History department where the knowledge of World War One and the Russian Revolution that students acquire in KS3 is then applied in English when engaging contextually with the KS4 Literature curriculum.

Teaching and learning in English is designed to ensure a high level of engagement, support and challenge as a constant for all students. Use of modelling – both in the form of pre-prepared WAGOLs and 'live' creation – is central to this as it allows students to fully understand both how the skills they are learning can be applied and the thought-process which supports their successful implementation. Additionally, active questioning is a central tenet of Horizon English pedagogy, used both to clarify the level of understanding by students but also as a method to explore and develop ideas, thus building confidence and analytical habits in the students. We are passionate about how staff oracy can become a tool used within lessons to promote a high level of standard English, modelling to our students how to speak confidently 'like an expert' when they are voicing their own views about texts or wider issues in society.

Assessment is fully embedded within the English curriculum, carefully designed to allow a teacher's perpetual awareness of the level that students are working at and what the next stages in the learning process should be. Progress Checks are implemented to specifically identify the level that a student is working at in the specific key skills which have been the focus of lessons for the previous fortnight. Students are then given an opportunity to reflect on their own work, using a model answer as point of comparison to address an area identified as requiring development. Assessments follow a similar

model, focusing on all the key skills learned so far in a specific area. At KS3, all progress checks and assessments explicitly refer to the Age Related expectations whilst at KS4 GCSE mark schemes are implemented; this is a deliberate approach to ensure that students are fully aware of the success criteria for their work, supporting them in being independent learners to identify both the level at which they are working and the reasons which underpin this standard. Students complete two summative assessments in each area of English throughout the academic year, improving on previously identified areas for development in a formal context; this makes explicit that they have embarked upon a five-year learning journey at Horizon, as opposed to a series of stand-alone schemes: a journey designed to ensure success in the English classroom and the world beyond.

Ultimately, English at Horizon is both engaging and enriching. Our curriculum vision is that the fifteen fundamental skills which KS3 is built around are now successfully implemented in practice to form the central building block upon which KS4 success is built. We wish to prepare students both for success in their GCSE results but, on a wider scale, for success in life, ensuring they are fully prepared for the post-16 world. Building on pupils' success at KS2, we endeavour to embed a love for texts, an ability to communicate with clarity and confidence and an analytical skillset: all of which prepares the students within the college for a successful life far beyond the confines of secondary education.