

ENGLISH

Course Content

KS3

The focus of KS3 is to develop a love for and understanding of reading; a confidence and proficiency in writing for different audiences and purposes and respond reflectively to the written word. These skills are foundational for success in all of their GCSE and A level subjects, and for life itself. Each term provides a range of reading and writing opportunities under titled thematic units including 'Fantasy', 'Crime and Punishment', 'Modern American Fiction', 'War and Conflict' and 'Heroes and Villains'.

Reading

In Years 7, 8 and 9 learners explore a wide variety of texts which are updated constantly and include:

- Contemporary novels such as 'Coraline,' 'War Horse' and 'Of Mice and Men'.
- Classics such as 'Frankenstein', 'Oliver Twist' and 'Sherlock Holmes'
- Non-fiction texts such as 'Touching the Void' as well as extracts from travel journals, newspaper and magazine articles, leaflets and promotional materials.
- Contextual and cultural understanding is also considered to illuminate the literature studied.
- Poems from 'The Canon' such as Shakespeare's sonnets about love and Browning's murderous monologues. The WW1 poetry of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon is studied and other British writers also feature heavily in the new curriculum.
- Contemporary poets such as Carol Anne Duffy; as well as poems from the wider world of English such as Imtiaz Dharkar, Grace Nichols and Ridjal Noor.
- The study of language in terms of the society we live in and the issues of power and identity which are often expressed in written texts are also examined.

Shakespeare

Learners are introduced to the study of Shakespeare through a selection of extracts from the comedy and historic genre in Year 7 including '12th Night' and 'Julius Caesar' leading onto a close study of 'Macbeth' in Years 8. With our proximity to the Globe, we ensure that Year 9s have the opportunity to visit the theatre and see a Shakespeare play performed. In 2013, we are booked to see 'Romeo and Juliet', 2014 'The Merchant of Venice' and in 2015 'Othello'.

Writing

Learners' skills as writers are honed both in response to the texts they read and in the production of their own imaginative and creative writing. Opportunities are provided throughout the year to prepare for and enter external writing competitions and HHS students have achieved considerable success with one student travelling abroad to take part in the finals of a poetry competition. The Department runs an annual poetry 'SLAM!' in the autumn with a well-known performance poet as master of ceremonies to celebrate National Poetry Day. All KS3 Learners submit their poems and enthusiastically take part.

Speaking and Listening

Despite speaking and listening no longer being part of the assessment criteria for GCSE English Language, at HHS we believe that speaking and listening is vital in terms of learners progress and understanding. Through guided talk learners engage and develop skills intrinsic to the study of both language and literature. Opportunities for role play, discussion, individual presentation and the development of listening skills are embedded in our schemes of work and home learning projects. However, they are not formally assessed. We are committed to developing our learners as confident English speakers and listeners and encourage KS3 to join our after school debating society.

Early Start

We believe that careful preparation for GCSE is fundamental if learners are to achieve or exceed their target grades; in consequence, Year 9s begin an introduction to GCSE English in Year 9. This course 'shadows' the GCSE programme introducing learners to the standards of reading and writing expected at GCSE; preparing them for assessment models they will be expected to master, while consolidating the Year 9 skills.

Assessment

Year 7 Initial 'baseline test':

- All Year 7 learners are given an initial assessment using the baseline test issued by the GCSE boards (AQA and Edexcel) which are used for the new GCSE assessment.
- The baseline assessment for the start of Year 7 will be given for both Literature and Language – supplying us with a starting point for measuring progress, serving as a diagnostic to inform our teaching and introducing students to secondary study.

Year 7 and 8 End 9 of Year exams:

- Formal End of Year exam. The (KS3) exams are designed and have been mapped to the requirements of the new GCSEs (9–1) in English Language and in English Literature.

Termly assessment:

- Extended Reading and Writing Tasks on the unit of work being studied each half term; National Curriculum Level (Fine Grade) awarded for Autumn, NCL and GCSE Grade awarded from Spring 1.

Reading Intervention

Recognising that robust reading skills are vital for success at school and work, we identify and assess all incoming learners with both an on-line assessment tool (STAR) as well as evaluating their reading and writing classwork to establish whether they may need some additional support. Identified learners follow a reading weekly programme with Ms Bowman/Ms Holder which has a significant impact on their skills and their confidence. Learners thoroughly enjoy the sessions and are sad when the programme is completed.

Setting

Classes at all key stages are set which allows the differentiation of texts, materials and lesson pitch so that learners are placed where they have the appropriate level of support and challenge.

KS3 Homework

- Homework is designed to support and embed the skills needed to access and thrive in English. There is a focus on both accuracy and engagement.
- Homework involves a weekly focused task on grammar or spelling. In addition, learners are issued with a termly Home Learning Project (HLP) which is focused on developing independent study and research skills either individually or in small groups.