

ST RICHARD'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

English Department Information Booklet



ST RICHARD'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

A Brief Introduction To The Department

STAFF

- Di Midghall Subject Leader (B15)
- Lis Wood Second in English with responsibility for Key Stage 3 Teaching & Learning (A8)
- Julie Leggatt (Link 3)
- Nigel Drake (B12)
- Abi Hills (A7)
- Mike Padgham (B10)
- Kate Standen
- Melanie Wood Key Stage 4 Co-ordinator (A1)
- John Steele (B11)

SUPPORT STAFF

- Kathryn Lea-White (TA Co-ordinator)
- Cecilia Hubbard (TA Co-ordinator)

Roles and Responsibilities

There are nine members of the English department, each of whom teaches across the range of year groups and abilities. Every teacher has their own teaching room/form base with one exception.

The Subject Leader has overall responsibility for all aspects of the department and its organisation. In particular, she is responsible for monitoring the department's progress and development, and for all aspects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

Lis Wood's responsibilities include Key Stage 3 administration and organisation, as well as the implementation of APP. She is responsible for the department's reporting system across all years, which includes statement banks. Lis is also responsible for trainee teachers as Professional Tutor.

Teaching Groups

Key Stage 3 English is taught mainly in mixed ability groups, with a few exceptions. In Year 7, the year is divided into two halves for timetabling purposes and of the eight groups in total, two are smaller teaching groups to support those pupils who arrive with weak literacy skills. In Year 8 the pupils remain in two halves on the timetable, but are mixed up in English lessons so that there are four mixed ability groups on each 'side'. Those pupils with special needs are supported within these groupings.

In Year 9 the whole year group is taught English at the same time. In this year there is one smaller teaching group which supports the weakest pupils. The remaining seven groups are taught as mixed ability classes.

Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 are placed in ability sets based on various data/indicators, including individual class performance, CAT scores, teacher recommendations and FFT data. The higher ability sets are usually bigger groups, with a maximum of 28/30 pupils; an attempt is made in the middle sets to keep the groups smaller, usually around 23/24, with the lowest group of around 15/16.



GCSE English Language/English Literature

In Year 11 all pupils are entered for the GCSE English Language and Literature AQA syllabus. The settings across Years 10 and 11 allow scope for choice of texts/resources to challenge and meet the needs and abilities of all.

GCSE Media Studies is taught by both John Steele and Di Midghall in Years 10 and 11. These are mixed ability option groups based on pupil choice.

Supporting Individual Pupil Needs and Setting Targets

Within the first week of Year 7 all pupils are tested for both their reading and spelling ages, these alongside the CATs results in Year 7 and the Key Stage 2 results, are used as the basis for assessing pupil needs, measuring potential and setting achievable pupil targets. All data is recorded and tracked by teachers. Target grades are set at the beginning of each academic year by the class teacher, but are focussed on achievement by the end of the Key Stage. Spelling and reading are tested annually during Key Stage 3.

Classroom teachers, along with the two TAs, are responsible for providing differentiated teaching materials for supporting Special Needs pupils and our More Able pupils.



Planning and Teaching

Detailed programmes of study exist at Key Stage 3. All plans are saved within the 'English' space on the school's 'T' drive and google drive as a record of the department's work.

The class teacher works in conjunction with Special Needs staff to differentiate material so that it meets the needs of all pupils. In addition, pupils in Years 7 and 8 will attend weekly 'Library' lessons, which are focussed on developing private reading and promoting active reading skills. Pupils also have a dedicated lesson each week focussing on SPAG and broader exam skills.

In Year 9, the schemes of work are focussed on teaching a whole class novel, poetry, a play, Reading, Writing and Shakespeare, alongside a choice of workshops. Pupils should also attend 'Library lessons' as they did during Years 7 and 8.

Good practice is embedded in all teaching at Key Stage 3. Pupils are encouraged to approach learning in a variety of ways, often drawing the skills of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing together to support and inform each other. Drama techniques are also often utilised to deliver class objectives. A variety of teaching and learning approaches are employed and these are detailed in teachers' planning. Lessons are fast-paced and well structured, with opportunities for regular group work, as well as peer and self-assessment.

The English Department's teaching at Key Stage 4 aims to extend and develop the good work of Key Stage 3, building on pupils' prior knowledge and skills and preparing them for the future world of work.

Organisation of Pupils' Classwork and Homework

At Key Stage 3, pupils currently work in an A4 exercise book; this should include all draft work, as well as final drafts of work which may be produced on A4 paper (particularly if word processed) and then stuck into the book. Homework is set twice a week and may include private reading, research, revision, as well as written work. A record of any spelling errors would normally be made in the Spag sheets in the middle of the exercise book for pupils to use for revision purposes.



At Key Stage 4, pupils usually work on A4 loose leaf paper which they store in a file. They may also use an exercise book for draft work/revision notes. Homework follows the pattern set in Key Stage 3, although the time stipulated to spend is longer according to whole school policy, and some tasks set may require more independent organisation, where pupils are responsible for breaking down an assignment to fit several homework periods over one or two weeks.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and sanctions within the department follow those used across the college as a whole. Teachers use the Debit/Credit system as an immediate response to pupil work/behaviour. Weekly department detentions are available every Thursday in B15, although individual teachers often prefer to set their own detentions (parents should be given 24 hours' notice of an after-school detention). There is an exercise book for recording department detentions and any pupil concerns which is kept in the Subject Leader's pigeon hole. In very extreme cases an occasional Saturday morning detention is available; this facility is only offered through the LMT. Behaviour problems are referred to the Subject Leader in the first instance. An 'incident report' should be completed on Sims to communicate any issues, even if they are a response to an 'escalating' problem rather than an immediate incident. Pastoral Leaders will follow up pupils who repeatedly misbehave, often by using a report card.

Rewards include postcards home and certificates in all year groups.

Marking Pupils' Work

Pupils' work is regularly marked by the class teacher using the agreed mark scheme and following the department's marking policy. The focus is always on the *written* comment which should detail achievements as well as targeting areas to work on. Spelling, punctuation and grammar will always be assessed, but



annotation of pupils' work and comments on it may focus on one or two particular areas which are of importance for that pupil's progress; picking out too many issues at once can be overwhelming and counter-productive for pupils.

At Key Stage 3, pupils are marked with a score. There should be a few assessment pieces at the end of each 'unit'. Pupils should also receive an effort grade, 1-5, to suggest how hard they have worked.

Departmental Monitoring

A system of monitoring the department's work is followed by the Subject Leader in conjunction with the department's line manager. There is a schedule for monitoring each year group's exercise books/folders, as well as teacher planners and displays. This is an opportunity to recognise each teacher's achievements, as well as discuss potential problems and ensure high standards. Work is given to a partner who RAG codes it and then passes it to the Subject Leader, who will write her own report, before passing it on to the Line Manager for her comments.

The department is also thoroughly monitored every year through the process of Self Review. This is the responsibility of the Subject Leader, with support from the department.

Department Development

Informal meetings happen often within the department and are one of the ways in which much good practice is shared. The department also spend a lot of their own time in supporting pupils facing tests and exams by running 'booster sessions' after college.

Formal department meetings happen once or twice each term according to the school calendar and include department admin along with moderation of pupil work, and a chance to share and develop teaching and learning strategies.

There is a three year plan for the Department to which everyone should contribute. Copies of plans and policies for the department are available on the 'T' drive, in the 'English' folder and on google drive.

Media Studies

This subject is taken as an option. It is a popular course. We follow the AQA specification which requires three pieces of Controlled Assessment (60%) and an exam (40%) which is on a different topic each year e.g. 2017 – TV Game Shows.

There are three 50 minute lessons a week currently organised as one double lesson and a single. Di Midghall has been a Lead Professional for Media Studies in East Sussex. A bank of laptops is available in B11 and five PCs with editing equipment are also available.

GCSE Results

Results for the English Department can be seen below.

2010/2011		2013/2014	
English A*-C	92%	English A*-C	83%
English Literature A*-C	92%	English Literature A*-C	100%
Media Studies A*-C	95%	Media Studies A*-C	100%
2011/2012		2014/2015	
English A*-C	79%	English A*-C	83%
English Literature A*-C	100%	English Literature A*-C	88%
Media Studies	89%	Media Studies A*-C	85%
2012/2013		2015/2016	
English A*-C	84%	English A*-C	82%
English Literature A*-C	98%	English Literature A*-C	84%
Media Studies A*-C	86%	Media Studies A*-C	86%

Extra-Curricular

We try to offer a rich and varied diet of trips, workshops and clubs. We have taken pupils to see productions of 'Romeo and Juliet', 'To Kill a Mockingbird', 'Lord of the Flies', 'Private Peaceful', 'An Inspector Calls', 'Blood Brothers' and the Poetry Live GCSE event, to name just a few.

In school we have workshops such as a Romeo and Juliet workshop for the whole of year 9 run by a professional theatre company. We regularly run BBC Newsday and take part in the Rotary club's Public Speaking competition. There is a media club for KS3 pupils and a creative writing club. We enter a number of national competitions such as Poetry by Heart and internally organise competitions, such as the extreme reading competition and designing a postcard illustrating holiday reading. We run competitions in liaison with the librarian to promote reading, and run a number of events on World Book Day as well as having visiting authors give talks and run workshops.



We are looking for an enthusiastic, creative individual who can contribute to our already engaging and inspiring team. This is a great department with excellent results.

St Richard's is an 11-16 Catholic school with 997 pupils. All year groups are over-subscribed and the percentage of Catholics is 86%. Our GCSE results for 5 or more including English and Maths in the past three years have been: 2015-16 – 82%, 2014-15 – 73%, 2013-14 – 77.4%. Progress 8 in 2016 was 0.58.

St Richard's is a really special place to work being described by many as a family school with positive, respectful and committed pupils. Staff and pupils enjoy coming to school and each is encouraged to develop to the full. Ours is a 'can do' culture with the belief that everyone can achieve. We have an extensive extra-curricular and leadership programme for pupils and there are countless CPD opportunities for staff at all levels. All in the community are expected to be ambitious for themselves and others.

Our faith is central to all we do and therefore the ethos is very much centred on Gospel values. All in our community are expected to reach out and support the vulnerable. Service is key. The Diocesan Inspection (November 2013) graded the school outstanding in every aspect.

Our school is outstanding, not only in terms of academic success but also in terms of its extended provision to all and our desire to ensure outstanding teaching and learning for every child. High expectations underpin all we do. Teaching School Status (May 2014), Strategic Partner in the Sussex Maths Hub (June 2014) and National Support School (February 2015) indicate that it is an exciting time to be joining the school with greater professional development opportunities for all staff, particularly those involved in outreach work.