

English Best Practice Grid Key Stage 3

What should we see in English lessons as best practice?

Through our English curriculum, our mission is to enable all students to flourish in English. The curriculum provides both direct and indirect knowledge for KS4 as a whole, not just English and English Literature. The KS3 curriculum provides students with readiness to handle challenging content, and ensures that students have the background knowledge needed to approach learning effectively. The programme is designed so that students graduate from Year 9 as confident and literate readers and critical and accurate writers. By the end of key stage three, they will know more about the foundational texts in literature, will be able to remember more about English Literature's social and historical context and will be able to do more creative and critical writing. Our curriculum is cumulative and integrated. All the content and knowledge is connected so that students form a firm foundation of literary and linguistic knowledge that enables them to read and write accurately and critically.

Students will work with a variety of literary texts that include: Victorian fiction, Shakespearean plays, Modern Literature and Poetry. They will always be shown how to analyse language, structure, theme and context. They will be required to recall and compare links to, and between, prior learning and literary movements.

Teachers will read texts aloud (novels, poem, plays, articles and extracts) with students. Teachers will explicitly teach T2/3 vocabulary.

In order to cover all elements of our comprehensive curriculum, English lessons are organised as follows:

- 3 hours of core curriculum
- Reading and writing for pleasure

What does great modelling and exposition look like in English?

We aim for security in specified content and explicit reflection on the role of context, characters, themes, events, vocabulary etc. English teachers will explain key concepts and skills, modelling annotations and written answers using visualisers and model answers. The Rushey Principles are embedded throughout our curriculum in order that students are fully equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence for success.

In order for students to be able to read and understand a text, they need to be experts in its domain which is achieved through engaging exposition and hinge questions. Having a strong understanding of the text's context, plot, purpose and author enables them to make connections and solidify their understanding.

What does effective questioning and scaffolding look like in English?

We aim for mastery in specified content of writing and explicit reflection on the themes, morality and ideology present in the high-quality texts we study.

We help students develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually through the texts they study and the activities they complete. We carefully sequence tasks so that students develop a range of different skills. Rather than just focusing on analysing 'Oliver Twist' or 'Merchant of Venice', we encourage students to respond emotionally and spiritually to characters and plot.

Questioning is integral to the teaching of English at Key Stage 3. In classrooms, questions are used to check for misunderstanding and misconceptions as well as being used to develop students' critical thinking. A combination of strategies are used such as 'cold calling' and 'pose, pause, bounce'.

Furthermore, students are supported using Rosenshine's Principles of 'I do', 'We do', 'You do'. Sentence starters, scaffolding and planning are regularly used in comprehension and academic-style essay writing.

Oracy is also central to scaffolding in English, with students encouraged to articulate their ideas using 'Think, Pair, Share' or through classroom discussion before composing written responses.

What does retrieval practice look like in English ?

Retrieval practice helps to ensure that knowledge that must be remembered in order to access new knowledge is rehearsed and recalled to build effective schema.

Written and oral quizzes will be routinely used to check recall of key knowledge including, but not limited to, plot, character, context, and quotations.

Knowledge Organisers and timelines are used at strategic points to check recall and previous knowledge relevant to the current topic.

Knowledge descriptions are available for staff to use and identify key themes, concepts, content etc that will be required in the future. At KS4, all units of work

<p>Knowledge is carefully selected due to its power and future use. We explicitly teach and test the knowledge that will support students' understanding of previous and future texts in the English Literary canon.</p> <p>In classrooms, teachers regularly model using visualisers to enable students to access challenging and illuminating texts.</p>	<p>clearly map what has been previously taught and how some concepts will need to be retrieved whereas others explicit taught.</p>
<p>What will you see in pupils' workbooks?</p> <p>In our curriculum, knowledge is cumulative to ensure students know more and remember more. Each strand, each unit within each strand, each lesson within each unit, each activity within each lesson builds on what has come before and acknowledges what is to come.</p> <p>The guiding principle is to help students write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length. Every activity, and every lesson, is helping students build towards this point.</p> <p>We want students to finish KS3 as articulate and literate English experts. To do this, they need to be able to write about texts and ideas accurately and precisely. This approach ensures working memory is not overloaded and helps students transfer knowledge to their long-term memories, so pupils' workbooks demonstrate their accuracy and knowledge in both retrieval and extended writing. Written answers to questions will be in full sentences and employ suitable T2/3 vocabulary. They will range from a few sentences to whole paragraphs and extended pieces of writing.</p> <p>There will be exercises whereby students apply knowledge, rules of grammar and vocabulary to craft creative, independent pieces of writing.</p> <p>Longer synoptic tasks: students will complete independent extended tasks before every assessment. Modelling, scaffolding and re-drafting will be punctuated by whole-class discussion fostering analytical and/or creative thinking.</p> <p>In English, students complete work in exercise books, booklets and annotated copies of the set texts, and students take pride in their academic resources.</p>	<p>What formative assessment and feedback will you see in English?</p> <p>An integrated summative and formative assessment model is used, with a standardised assessment for each unit of work. Targeted formative assessment is included throughout each unit in addition to the summative assessments. Each of the formative assessment quizzes isolates particular skills and knowledge items in order to give you and your students a clear picture of how strong their grasp of each item is.</p> <p>Mid-Point and End of Unit Assessments, along with feedback, allow students to build on prior knowledge and skills enabling them to master key concepts in the curriculum.</p>
<p>What questions are useful to ask the children about their learning to elicit understanding?</p> <p>Each scheme of work is accompanied by a Curriculum Intent document which outlines key knowledge, concepts and links to prior/future learning.</p> <p>The information on these documents is organised into what students need to have a working knowledge of and</p>	<p>How do teachers in English engage with the subject community?</p> <p>Afterschool webinar sessions on the pedagogical areas that will be most impactful to our students are attended throughout the year, in addition to other subject training opportunities such as the Subject</p>

<p>what they should be able to remember in the longer term. This is further classified into:</p> <p>Biography Context Characters Events Vocabulary</p> <p>Teachers will be asking questions aimed to get students thinking deeply and critically, as well as asking retrieval questions. In English, we aim to make students think carefully about the questions that are asked as they frequently transcend set texts/scenarios, and we hope that through thinking carefully in English students are able to know more and to apply their knowledge to different disciplines and scenarios.</p> <p>Teachers will ask questions linking to these topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does x theme/character/event relate to y theme/ character /event? • How is theme/character/event presented? • Why is theme/character/event presented? • What is the author’s intent? • What is the writer’s perspective? • Can you summarise x? <p>Further insightful questions to elicit understanding will be asked about disciplinary knowledge, literary themes and non-fiction forms.</p> <p>Big questions are also posed each lesson with the view to getting students to think about learning as a continuum, and these will also be used by teachers to elicit understanding.</p>	<p>Improvement Forum, Wednesday CPD sessions, AQA hub, PL Mondays, English Hub meetings and CPD in faculty meetings.</p>
<p>How is Literacy taught in English?</p> <p>Reading is a cornerstone of learning, particularly in subjects like English, where it serves as the basis for understanding language, culture, and critical thinking. Encouraging students to read widely develops their vocabulary, comprehension, and analytical skills, helping them engage with more complex texts over time.</p> <p>In English we use the High 5 Reading Routine. This structured approach encourages active reading.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior Knowledge 2. Read Aloud 3. New Vocabulary 4. Question 5. Summarise <p>At KS3, wider reading is encouraged in a number of ways. The use of British Library resources in the teaching of Oliver Twist and Jane Eyre enriches students' exposure to historical and primary sources. Links to curated</p>	<p>How do we meet the needs of all learners in English?</p> <p>Teachers plan English lessons with a clear focus on meeting the needs of all learners through adaptive teaching. Teachers ask questions that encourage deep, critical thinking alongside regular retrieval to strengthen long-term memory. In English, questions often transcend individual texts and scenarios, supporting students to apply knowledge across disciplines and contexts. Further insightful questions are used to elicit understanding of disciplinary knowledge, literary themes, authorial intent, and non-fiction forms. Big questions are posed in each lesson to frame learning as a continuum and are revisited to check understanding and shape explanations. Across English, adaptive teaching strategies are embedded in lesson design. Teachers use pre-teaching to introduce key vocabulary, contextual knowledge, and challenging concepts, particularly supporting SEND, PP, NTE, and emerging readers. Vocabulary instruction is carefully planned, with etymology explicitly taught to deepen understanding, while</p>

collections or exhibitions complement units being studied, giving students deeper insight and context for their reading.

Disciplinary reading refers to reading that is specific to a subject or discipline. In English, this involves understanding how to read literary texts differently from how one might read scientific papers or historical documents. This is taught in a number of ways including, Close Reading which is used in most lessons to analyse specific words, phrases, and structures in literary texts. The teaching of Critical Theories and engagement with academic essays and theories (e.g., feminism, Marxism, post-colonialism) is also used to offer deeper insight into texts taught such as 'The Tempest' by William Shakespeare and 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell.

Silent reading is embedded into lessons and fosters independent learning and allows students to reflect on texts without immediate pressure to respond. It also develops focus and instils a sense of enjoyment in reading.

Library lessons are timetabled into the English curriculum and ensure that students have regular access to library resources and are guided on how to find and select books that extend their knowledge.

In collaboration with the library, authors are also invited to speak, either in person or virtually with KS3 classes. They inspire students to think about reading and writing in new ways and provides a tangible connection to the books they are studying or enjoying.

At KS3 Reading for Pleasure is integrated into SoW and promotes reading for enjoyment through the delivery of a 19th Century text, a modern novel and a play. In addition to this, conversations with students, book recommendations, and informal discussions about what they are currently reading also serve to promote a love of reading.

vocabulary is limited and prioritised where appropriate to reduce cognitive overload. Sentence starters, writing frames, and modelled responses are used to scaffold thinking and writing, allowing students to articulate ideas clearly while maintaining high expectations. The *I do, we do, you do* approach supports explicit instruction and the gradual release of responsibility. Retrieval is planned throughout lessons and across sequences through questioning, low-stakes activities, and recap tasks, ensuring learning is cumulative.

Dual coding through images, diagrams, and visual cues supports understanding, particularly for SEND learners and emerging readers. Booklets with glossaries reduce cognitive load, enabling students to focus on learning rather than searching for definitions. Lessons are carefully chunked, and teachers use strong teaching skills such as clear explanations, purposeful questioning, modelling, and responsive pacing. Misconceptions are anticipated during planning, with explanations adapted to ensure clarity and precision.

For SEND students, adaptations are built into lessons rather than added retrospectively. Teachers prioritise and revisit key vocabulary, use adapted annotations, simplified explanations, and carefully selected key extracts. Scaffolding, chunked tasks, and visual supports are gradually removed as independence develops, ensuring consistent access to learning.

PP students benefit from explicit instruction, structured support, writing frames, and frequent opportunities for retrieval and practice. High-quality questioning, contextualised examples, and clear success criteria support engagement and ambition.

For NTE students, teachers carefully consider pacing, modelling, and explanation, embedding contextualised examples and guided practice to build confidence and fluency over time.

Emerging readers are supported through adapted texts, shared reading, and explicit reading routines such as the *High Five Reading Routine*. Teachers identify key extracts, use visual support and dual coding to aid comprehension, and work closely with the LDT team to ensure appropriate support.