



Willingdon

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM BOOKLET

ENGLISH

Sept 2023

Critical thinking through
language.

Our School Curriculum Intent

The curriculum at Willingdon Community School offers a broad, balanced, personalised and challenging educational experience, which builds on students' experiences in the primary phase of their education.

It aims to provide all students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes which are necessary if they are to become successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve the best they are capable of.

Subject Vision

English lessons at Willingdon encourage students to think, read and write critically. We aim for students to be aspirational learners, and develop their curiosity for learning through critical thought and debate. Students in English develop a mastery of language through literature, being exposed to a wide range of high-quality texts which develop cultural capital. Our broad and ambitious curriculum includes texts from different eras and cultures, celebrating diversity and promoting empathy, curiosity and understanding of a range of places, lives and perspectives. We study the best writers and thinkers in order better to understand the power that excellent writing has to change the world.

Key Concepts in English

English provides an unparalleled opportunity to develop transferrable skills in analysing and communicating complex ideas. Close text analysis, whole class discussion and opportunities for extended writing are key elements of English lessons at Willingdon, allowing students the opportunity to develop resilience and ambition.

Our curriculum includes a wide array of activities to engage students in the content and skills of the topic being studied each term. We prioritise opportunities for exploration and creativity to develop purposeful, effective learning.

In Years 7, 8 and 9, study of a range of texts including prose, poetry, fiction and non-fiction prepares students for Key Stage 4 as well as progressively building upon their reading, writing and vocabulary knowledge. Our KS3 curriculum is structured to introduce students to a wide range of different texts, genres and ideas in the literature that they study.

In Years 10 and 11, the GCSE course follows on directly from the work of the first three years at Willingdon, developing opportunities for analytical and creative writing and independent reading as well as expanding students' knowledge of vocabulary, thematic exploration and technical skills.

What students say about their English lessons

'My English lessons are so enjoyable because they are action-packed and everyone is included in the frequent class discussions in which we bounce ideas across the classroom. All of our English teachers are so supportive and I find it rewarding seeing my hard work pay off as my grades improve. The praise I receive from my teacher makes me more driven and means I look forward to my English lessons every day.'

'I love English because I can understand what is going on. My teacher always makes the lessons enjoyable.'

'English is a calming environment and you can be creative and write with your own mind.'

'In Years 7, 8 and 9 you will get to read lots of books. I really like reading because it challenges you to understand more about the world.'

'I love English because it allows me to travel to different worlds and experience the thoughts and stories of brilliant writers with my peers. My English teacher helps me to improve my analytical skills through sharing models in class.'

'All the teachers in the English department have a passion for their subject and I am so lucky to be taught by them.'



Programme of Study

Key Stage 4

The Key Stage 4 English programme of study builds on the breadth and challenge in Key Stage 3 to provide an academically rigorous and ambitious course for all students.

At Key Stage 4, we strive to challenge students through critical thinking. Students will work hard to develop the skills needed for success in their two English GCSEs and in the world beyond the classroom.

Skills in communication, empathy and compassion are at the heart of our teaching in English. Wide reading encourages young people to understand themselves within the world; good language skills give young people a voice. Through the study of a range of excellent writing from different times, both fiction and non-fiction, as well as time dedicated to developing students' skills in writing and spoken language, we aim to ensure that young people leave our school with the ability to listen and read critically and empathetically and to write with ambition and precision of ideas and vocabulary.

We aim to develop students' skills in independent study and organisation. As our GCSE courses are assessed through 100% examination, students are encouraged to see classwork as the opportunity to create their own high-quality revision resources, taking care and pride in their work throughout the course. Homework is challenging and varied, and students are expected to work hard at home to practise key skills and return to important knowledge from different parts of the course, to ensure understanding is fully embedded.

English Language

Students will study a range of nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century fiction and non-fiction texts. They will explore themes and writers' ideas as well as investigating how language is used to influence the reader. This course exposes students to a wide range of texts to develop their reading and writing skills simultaneously. Students will learn how to understand, summarise, analyse and compare texts in depth and to a high standard. In the writing elements of the course, students will refine their narrative and descriptive writing skills and develop their ability to write to promote a viewpoint in their own non-fiction texts.

English Literature

Students will be taught how to appreciate the power of the written word and will explore the ideas of great writers. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of texts from the following areas: a play by Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*; a 19th century prose text, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens; a modern text, *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley; an anthology of poetry, including work by the Romantic poets; and a range of contemporary poetry.

Extra-curricular Opportunities

Students at Key Stage 4 will have the opportunity to attend theatre trips related to the course. They will be encouraged to challenge and develop themselves as readers, by independently reading texts linked to or inspired by ideas explored in class.

Year 11 students can also attend seminars, away days and mentoring sessions to develop vital technical skills and improve exam strategy.

Headline Figures: Summer 2022 Results

37% of students achieved Grade 7-9 in English.

74% of students achieved Grade 5-9 in English.

88% of students achieved Grade 4-9 in English.





Assessment Plan for Key Stage 4

All students will take GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. Both courses are assessed through examinations in the summer of Year 11.

Students' progress will be assessed throughout the course, within classwork and through mid-unit and end-of-unit assessments based on real GCSE exam questions.

Reflecting on progress and acting on feedback to improve performance are central elements of the Key Stage 4 English course. We ensure that students take ownership of their learning by giving them the vocabulary and strategies to reflect on where they are within their learning journey and to make changes needed to deepen their critical, creative or persuasive skills.

There are two exams for English Language (AQA 8700). Each is 1 hour 45 minutes in length.

- Paper 1 – Explorations in creative reading and writing.
- Paper 2 – Writers' viewpoints and perspectives.

There are two exams for English Literature (AQA 8702).

- Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th century novel. (1 hour 45 minutes)
- Paper 2 – Modern texts and poetry. (2 hours 15 minutes).

Before the end of the course, students will have sat all four English papers in examination conditions to allow them to practise timing and technique.

In addition, students complete a spoken language presentation as part of the English Language GCSE.

Students complete both courses with ample time allotted in Year 11 for focused revision and improvement work.

Programme of Study

Key Stage 3

In our English lessons, students think, read and write critically. We aim to provide opportunities for students to be aspirational, ambitious learners, to develop their curiosity and to be challenged through critical thought and debate.

Each term includes work on developing speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. All units encourage students to reflect on their own learning, discuss questions or problems in a meaningful way and use targets and collaboration to improve the quality of their own work.

Crucially, each year provides a clear learning journey for students; our learners are able to make clear links across terms through thematic progression. Lessons and assessment have been thoughtfully structured to ensure that, year on year, students build on existing skills and knowledge. The programme has been designed to encourage ambitious study; students are exposed to a wide range of literature, and by the end of KS3, are fully prepared for the challenges of GCSE.

Year 7: Introduction to Literature – new worlds, places and times

Our first term sees students consolidating and building on their KS2 skills. Learners continue to develop their curiosity through a thematic study of narrative writing. By considering how writers create characters and construct descriptions, students find inspiration to carefully plan and craft their own stories.

As they move through the programme, students have the opportunity to critically read an engaging novel. Learners not only develop a love of reading, but write critically about the writer's purpose and form their own opinions.

The Year 7 course continues with study of literature from a range of cultures, poetry from the Romantic Period and a Shakespearean play.

Year 8: Beyond Literature – new forms, genres and perspectives

During terms one and two, students enjoy reading and engaging critically with a pair of contrasting novels. The programme's learning journey continues with the opportunity to explore a range of linked dystopian stories, providing students with inspiration to create their own thematic descriptions.

Building on concepts of protest, students study a carefully selected anthology of poetry as they progress through the year.

The Year 8 programme also includes exciting literary non-fiction extracts on the theme of survival, allowing students to compare viewpoints and develop their own transactional writing skills.

Year 9: Exploring Literature – examining the big ideas of isolation, power and tragedy

The Year 9 course begins with the study of a challenging novel building on students' understanding of key themes.

Students will use literary classics from the 19th and 20th centuries as inspiration for their own descriptive and narrative writing, continuing to make connections across texts.

Students have the chance to further develop their analytical and comparative skills through the study of poems that explore ideas of power and tragedy.

The year ends with further thematic progression, culminating in the study of a classic Shakespearean play, encouraging the in-depth, ambitious exploration of ideas that prepare students to transition into GCSE study.



Assessment Plan for Key Stage 3

Each term's work is designed to build a specific set of skills within the English curriculum. The Key Stage 3 Programme is structured to place equal emphasis on both reading and writing skills, as well as incorporating crucial speaking and listening skills, in order to give students the best foundation for studying GCSE at Key Stage 4.

Students sit a practice assessment at the mid-point of each unit, giving them the opportunity to benefit from teacher and peer feedback to improve the quality of their work. End-of-unit assessments are taken in class, normally within one lesson and under exam conditions. Assessments follow the same model and layout in every unit for consistency and clarity.

Our assessment model has been designed to ensure that there is a progression of skills introduced at Key Stage 3 to provide students with the necessary knowledge for Key Stage 4.

Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6
Year 7	Narrative Writing	Analytical Reading	Discursive Writing	Analytical Reading	Persuasive Writing and Talk	Analytical Reading
Year 8	Analytical Reading	Analytical Reading	Descriptive Writing	Analytical Reading	Writing to Advise	Writing to Promote a Viewpoint
Year 9	Analytical Reading	Descriptive Writing	Comparative Reading	Analytical Reading	Critical Writing and Talk	Creative Writing

Parents / carers can help their child to achieve in English by:

- Encouraging their child to read widely and regularly by reading with, alongside or to their child.
- Encouraging discussion about books by asking their child what they think of the books they are reading both at home and in lessons.
- Supporting their child with homework at Key Stage 4 by testing quotes and knowledge of characters, themes and ideas in our Literature texts.
- Sharing high-quality articles and discussing the issues they raise, using websites such as Guardian News and BBC News.
- Visiting libraries, bookshops and charity shops to browse a range of different books.
- Supporting oracy by sitting down weekly, perhaps over a meal, and talking about the learning in English lessons and about events in the wider world.

Literacy in English

English lessons are based upon building literacy skills that our students can carry forward in their careers. We aim for students to develop and broaden their critical vocabulary, become eloquent speakers and sophisticated writers. Technical skills are built upon each year in order to ensure proficiency and progress.



Numeracy in English

Numeracy in English is developed through a practical focus on exam strategy and timing. Across the four demanding exam papers, students learn to time manage each question to ensure they are able to fully complete each paper.

Students develop and value mathematical skills in English through the use of diagrams and graphs to help understand texts when planning writing, spotting patterns, thinking logically, problem-solving and hypothesising then checking predictions.

Raising aspirations in English

English at Willingdon will equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to become successful readers and writers. Our curriculum will encourage learners to make informed decisions about ideas, themes, characters and language in order to be able to enter into sophisticated discussion with their peers. Both Literature and Language skills developed across students' 5 years at Willingdon will allow them to understand and communicate with the world around them.

Broadening horizons in English

Our English curriculum is accessible and relevant for the students that we teach. We offer a wide range of authors and texts from different nationalities, cultures and time periods. Exposing students to these texts, and different backgrounds, is paramount in developing their worldly understanding and compassion.

Students prepare for life outside of school through purposeful debate, forming and presenting their opinions in an articulate and critical manner. This is further reinforced through opportunities to visit the theatre, explore careers options in English and be involved in creative workshops. Furthermore, students are given the opportunity to have English lessons in the library as well as being involved in writing workshops, author visits and volunteering as a student librarian.



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