

English Curriculum Statement

Our Philosophy

"There is no use trying," said Alice; "one can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

It is more important than ever that we recognise the importance of English as a means of developing a child and the person they will become as they grow up. Therefore, at the end of this part of their academic career, pupils will leave Penwortham Priory Academy enriched, inspired and with the belief that anything is possible for them to achieve. Thus, the educational aims for the English curriculum are to provide pupils with a curriculum that is engaging, inspiring and challenging for all, regardless of their ability. English is fundamental to education and society, meaning it is the responsibility and priority of all English teachers to ensure pupils are well equipped to meet the demands of adulthood and the world outside of education. Our philosophy is for pupils to be able to successfully communicate their ideas and emotions in a clear and effective manner. We want to foster a love and interest for reading, creativity and critical thinking, showing pupils how they can embed the knowledge from the English curriculum into their life and personal experiences.

We have endeavoured to produce a curriculum where a range of texts are used to create mirrors for our students to reflect upon their own experiences and identity, as well as offering them windows into other worlds (be that past or present). With our range of text choices, pupils can reflect upon experiences beyond their immediate sphere, giving them a better understanding of the wider world. Whilst, we consistently encourage pupils to strive for academic success, we passionately believe in delivering a uniquely Key Stage 3 experience for our students, where we seek to enthuse them about our subject and develop knowledge that may not be explicitly examined.

Intent

The Penwortham Priory Academy English Curriculum will enable pupils to:

- Become immersed in other places and cultures.
- Appreciate their literary heritage.
- Develop a strong moral compass, empathy and a clear idea of self.
- Develop confidence in using their voice to express themselves orally and in written communication.
- Engage in structured discussion so that they are able to actively consider viewpoints and experiences that differ to their own.
- Develop oracy skills to a high level, encouraging them to verbally express themselves clearly, coherently and in a manner appropriate to the context.
- Develop active listening skills so that they are able to respond to others in a courteous, respectful and purposeful manner.

- Take part in formal debates so that they can present their own viewpoints thoroughly.
- Develop inference and critical analysis skills, whilst also fostering a love of reading.
- Develop confidence in their abilities to use taught strategies to explore texts of high challenge.
- Write accurately and imaginatively for a range of purposes and audiences, using the highest quality language and structural devices.
- Appreciate the notion that a text is the product of a specific context and authorial intent.
- Develop a repertoire of ambitious vocabulary so that pupils are equipped with the language required to express themselves effectively, expressively, and accurately.
- Reflect upon their own social and moral viewpoints and change or alter them accordingly.
- Be passionate about the works of others as well as their own literary works.
- Make good progress regardless of starting point or social background.

English has a vital role to play in promoting SMSC and the fundamental British values within the school. The texts which we have selected to study and the content of our curriculum have been planned to compliment the delivery of these elements of pupils' wider education. We believe that English is uniquely placed to help shape a pupils' sense of identity and morality. It offers the opportunity for pupils to discover different ways of thinking, explore experiences of others which sit beyond their immediate sphere of reference and consider a range of factors which may shape who people become. It moreover requires pupils to reflect upon challenging questions and concepts related to human experience and the notion of what it means to be an empathetic and responsible citizen.

The expectations of the skills and knowledge pupils should have acquired and developed at the end of Key Stage 3 is clearly planned in each scheme of work and an understanding of this is shared by all staff. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been crafted to build upon the vast knowledge acquired at Key Stage 2. All pupils are expected to read, write and speak with accuracy, fluency and imagination whilst also showing a clear grasp of linguistic convention and grammar. Pupils will complete Key Stage 3 having honed all of the skills necessary for success at GCSE and having established a solid foundation of knowledge that will contribute towards a more a seamless transition to our challenging Key Stage 4 curriculum. All forms of assessment are designed deliberately to ensure that the jump from KS2 to KS4 is gradual and manageable yet also challenging, pushing pupils to go beyond their pre-conceived notions of what they can achieve.

Cultural capital has been placed at the heart of the curriculum whereby pupils are explicitly taught about literary genres and movements allowing pupils to understand how national and international events shaped experiences in different time periods and the influence this had on literature and human experiences at the time. We also allow pupils to explore works from different cultures and time periods in order to widen their understanding of experiences beyond that of themselves and their peers. We also seek to offer experiences that may not be accessible to all through visits to the theatre (to view productions purely for enjoyment or that are linked to their studies) and other places of literary inspiration or significance.

The department passionately believes that all pupils have the potential to excel regardless of their starting point and prior attainment and that they have a right to access a curriculum and teaching that supports them to achieve their personal standard of excellence. We are all aware of those pupils who are in need of additional support, whether this be due to SEND issues, lower-

than-expected reading ages or pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. All pupils in Year 7 are tested to establish reading age scores and those pupils who have fallen behind are given personalised support by members of the SEND department and through the 'Reading Plus' programme. 'Reading Plus' uses diagnostic testing to establish specific areas of weakness, and provides a personalised programme to target necessary areas. The SEND department are able to work on a small group or one-to-one basis with those requiring support beyond this.

All teachers are made aware of who their SEND and PP pupils are on seating plans and department tracking sheets and all teachers are aware of their responsibility to ensure that any obstacles to learning are removed and the right that all pupils have to access the curriculum and to be held to the highest of expectations and standards. This can be anything from ensuring that specific pupil needs are catered for during lessons (using personalised strategies that are available to all staff), providing clear scaffolds for specific tasks, to the use of Pupil Premium funding to pay for resources and trips that would otherwise be unavailable to some pupils. Such labels should never be an excuse for underachievement and the department continues to maintain the highest standards and ambitions for all pupils we teach and nurture. These pupils will be monitored closely and any adaptations or interventions needed to support their achievement will be implemented in a timely manner.

The Golden Threads of the English Curriculum at Penwortham Priory Academy

At Penwortham Priory Academy, 'The Golden Threads' are key concepts that underpin the aims of our English curriculum. The knowledge and skills associated with each "thread" have been woven throughout our Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curricular in order to build the confidence in each concept, allowing them to succeed beyond their time at school.

Our 'Golden Threads' are as follows:

- Narrative
- Reading for Meaning
- Argument and Persuasion
- Figurative
- Structure
- Context
- Grammar
- Oracy

Narrative

- Understanding and accessing a range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Building knowledge of a range of genre tropes and conventions
- Building knowledge of and identifying character archetypes
- Creating a range of characters
- Tracking character arcs
- Tracking themes
- Identifying and utilising different narrative voices
- Tracking and plotting a narrative arc, considering how to build and structure an effective story
- Building tension
- Establishing an effective setting

Reading for Meaning

- Utilising strategies for decoding texts and vocabulary, including building knowledge of etymology
- Finding and selecting information
- Making inferences
- Having a personal response to a text
- Critically analysing a writer's choice of language and structure
- Speculating about the potential meaning of linguistic or structural choices within a text
- Comparatively reading texts, considering similarities and differences in meaning, structure and language
- Making links between texts and their contexts

Argument and Persuasion

- Identifying, exploring and creating a range of Non-Fiction text types, considering the differences in how they are formatted
- Identifying and utilising varying degrees of formality
- Writing for a range of purposes and audiences
- Crafting a convincing, well-balanced and persuasive argument
- Building an understanding of how to adopt different tones, depending upon purpose and audience
- Utilising persuasive devices for effect
- Effectively responding to arguments, utilising counter arguments
- Identifying how to appropriately structure a persuasive argument
- Identifying how to appropriately structure an analytical argument
- Expressing views clearly and effectively through both written and oral communication

Figurative

- Using a range of techniques to create effective characterisation, build tension and establish an effective setting, including:
 - Adjectives
 - Adverbs
 - Simile
 - Metaphor
 - Sensory Language
 - Onomatopoeia
 - Personification
 - Pathetic Fallacy
 - Show Don't Tell
 - Extended Metaphor
 - Semantic Fields
- Considering which techniques will be effective and most powerful, looking at examples and their effects

Structure

- Tracking and plotting a narrative arc, considering how to build and structure an effective story
- Identifying and analysing different poetic forms
- Considering how to effectively format a range of non-fiction texts
- Comparatively looking at a range of texts, considering how their structures and formats differ e.g. play scripts, novels, poems
- Engaging with play scripts, considering the purpose of a range of conventions, such as stage directions, asides and soliloquys.
- Engaging with and writing dramatic monologues
- Using a range of structural devices within writing, including:
 - Punctuation for effect
 - Caesura

- Juxtaposition
- Foreshadowing
- Enjambment
- Parenthesis
- Direct Speech

Context

- Understanding the development of storytelling over time
- Understanding the development of language over time
- Considering cultural and societal influence over texts
- Linking texts to their social, cultural, historical contexts
- Identifying a writer's authorial intent
- Considering the similarities and differences between the contexts of texts and why perspectives differ

Grammar

- Identifying and using a variety of word classes
- Developing ambitious vocabulary and using vocabulary for effect
- Understanding and using the different elements of a sentence to develop sentence construction
- Using sentence construction for effect
- Utilising cohesive devices to form a coherent text
- Utilising punctuation for effect
- Constructing paragraphs

Oracy

- Speaking confidently and fluently to peers
- Developing and sustaining talk
- Presenting a clear and effective point of view to meet the demands of an audience
- Using formal, standard English in formal settings
- Engaging in academic discussion and debate to develop views and knowledge
- Questioning and challenging views of others in an effective but respectful manner
- Responding to questions and feedback thoughtfully and clearly
- Developing active listening skills
- Utilising the 'Answer', 'Build', 'Challenge' structure when discussing views and ideas

Implementation

At Key Stage 3, pupils have four one-hour lessons per week and one 'Reading Plus' lesson; at Key Stage 4, pupils experience five one-hour lessons a week across both years of study, which are all taught by subject specialists. All pupils are entered for the GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature qualifications and the current model means that the KS4 English curriculum accounts for 20% of the school curriculum which is in line with national expectations.

Departmental CPD

The members of the department continue to receive CPD for new initiatives and ways of teaching the new GCSE specifications. This has taken the form of external courses in which members of staff are expected to share resources and concepts upon their return, or internal training organised by the 'Research, CPD and Teacher Development Lead' who is within the department. The entitlement to this provision is used clearly to improve departmental resources, pedagogical practise and use of metacognition to improve pupils learning and retention. This provision also includes dedicated time to independent study time where staff are encouraged to access training on an area that they feel they personally need to improve on (and can also apply to departmental foci) which can also be shared among the department. The department are encouraged to engage frequently with academic literature and share reading that is carried out. We are committed to our own CPD as we continue to evolve to ensure that we provide all pupils with the best learning experiences and opportunities to succeed.

Curriculum Design

At Key Stage 3, the English curriculum is designed to incrementally introduce the skills needed to access texts and hone communication (written and oral) skills to allow pupils to succeed at GCSE but also in the wider world. It provides pupils with a rough chronology of key literary periods which allows them to appreciate literature within its relevant context and also track the evolution of language and the idea that language will continue to evolve and need to be adapted by them. Exploring experiences through their studies at Key Stage 3 is part of our commitment to providing pupils mirrors through which to see themselves and the world they live in but also windows to view the experiences of others thus strengthening their understanding of the world and actively seeking to build confident, empathetic and compassionate citizens. All assessments are designed with testing key 'building block skills' and knowledge in mind in; however, deliberate structuring and scaffolding is used lower down school to ensure that all assessments are accessible (yet still suitably challenging) to all pupils. Each yearly programme of study affords pupils the chance to critically read a range of challenging text types and to write creatively for a range of purposes and audiences.

In addition to this, all Key Stage 3 classes study a number of age-appropriate class readers throughout the year which are studied alongside that half term's unit of work. These are mapped to build on topics and ideas pupils have explored or will explore in the future. This provides pupils with constant exposure to quality texts and encourages them to remain in the habit of reading for pleasure. Pupils at Key Stage 3 also have the opportunity to visit the library on a rota basis to allow them to access wider reading material and encourage them to read for pleasure. An induction to the library is given during the first few weeks in Year 7 to build familiarity with the range of texts that can be accessed here and to establish expectations for its use. This sits along an initially 'settling in' period where Year 7 pupils will take part in 'Just Reading' lessons where they can establish relationships with their teach through the simple reading and discussion of a class novel. This allows pupils to build confidence in their reading ability while placing the importance of reading at the heart of our department for pupils.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is designed to gather and extend the skills that have been developed at Key Stage 3 so that they can be moulded to help pupils exceed in their GCSE exams but also support them in entering the world of work and prepare them for real life situations. In Year 10 we focus on the appreciation of GCSE English Literature texts (novels, plays and poetry) considering meaning, context and authorial intent while practising key skills which will enable them to succeed in GCSE English Language also. In Year 11 we continue our literature studies but also include blocks of more explicit teaching of the GCSE Language syllabus to provide pupils with the practise needed to succeed.

Our Professional Practice

All English teachers routinely check pupils' understanding of topics throughout the course of study. 'Activ8' recap and recall starters, low stakes quizzes as well as mini-whiteboard tasks are recurrently used to ascertain knowledge and misconceptions and there is an expectation that teachers teach in a pro-active and responsive manner as a result of this information. All members of the department are in the habit of employing impactful questioning techniques to develop or identify pupils' way of thinking and the use of quality feedback – whether it be written or verbal – continues to form an important component of a pupil's experiences in their English lessons.

The department continues to place considerable focus on improving the long-term memory of pupils, subsequently leading them towards greater mastery of the skills and topics we cover. The department routinely uses low stakes quizzing, spacing and interleaving to ensure that pupils are constantly familiarizing themselves with prior content, consequently strengthening memories and the ability to recall vital information. We are also keenly aware that part of improving learning is to understand the thought processes of 'masters' in certain skills, to this end, the department is committed to evolving the use of metacognitive talk and completing of collaborative activities such as 'I Do, You Do, We Do' to help show pupils how 'experts' would approach tasks and why. This also allows us to show pupils that no-one is perfect and that we can all use our mistakes or gaps in knowledge a point of learning and improvement. This also part of our commitment to ensuring that pupils have routine access to high quality models and that we provide appropriate scaffolds when creating their own pieces. Using the highest quality of models helps pupils to hold high expectations of themselves and what they can achieve while the scaffolding equips them with the tools to reach those heights.

The teaching of subject-specific vocabulary and tier two words is explicit within English principally through our 'Magic 10' words which are used throughout both Key Stages and are revisited. In-line with the whole school approach, we use Frayer models to explore the etymology of words (allowing them to make links to similar or contrasting words etymologically and identifying common roots, prefixes and suffixes to help decode unfamiliar vocabulary) and provide pupils with an effective way of memorising new vocabulary. Words are power and we want all of our pupils to be equipped with the linguistic skills needed to achieve. Bedrock Learning is used through Key Stage 3 9 which looks at the explicit teaching and quizzing of tier 2 vocabulary. Student progress can be easily tracked using this programme and reports generated on a weekly or monthly basis. This learning is completed as homework and can be accessed via computer or mobile device.

Assessment within English continues to take a number of different forms. Reading abilities are tested on entry in Year 7 using the 'Reading Plus' programme which diagnoses strengths and areas for development in pupils reading abilities. This is completed with the SEN department who use it to determine the support required by individual pupils on a smaller group basis. Pupils complete formative assessment each term (which can test either reading, writing or

oracy skills) which will be assessed using a rubric to allow pupils to identify their next steps in progressing their work independently. Initially, the use of rubrics is initially heavily guided by the teacher before gradually being handed over to students to allow them to assess their progress and areas for development accurately. Pupils will be assessed termly through a summative assessment booklet which will test knowledge acquired from current and prior learning as well as reading and writing skills. As well as marking these assessments on an individual basis, key pieces will be marked comparatively to allow us to view the range of skills within each year group and identify any trends which may help us to improve our delivery and teaching practice. This will be formally marked by their teacher with clear feedback given on how to improve with time provided to allow them to do so. Testing pupils understanding is an integral part of everyday practice. All lessons are based around key 'hinge questions' (seen in our booklets as 'Learning Questions') to which pupils' responses will allow the teach to address misconceptions; assess whether pupils have the understanding to proceed further and re-teach areas if needed. Work within booklets will be 'live marked' either in written or verbal form with feedback given on how to progress but pupils will be expected to complete self and peer assessment more frequently to identify strengths and areas for development and improve their work.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning in English

In English lessons, pupils are taught to master the English language and to appreciate literature. All pupils study the subject throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 and at GCSE we enter every child for both English Language and English Literature (Eduqas syllabus). Our lessons are focused primarily on considering 'Big Questions' and exploring 'Big Ideas' through which we encourage pupils to think analytically, critically and creatively. This allows them to opportunity to actively engage with the viewpoints of others. Structured academic discussion and debate in which pupils are challenged to express their viewpoints, consider others and respond to them either through building on what has been said or challenging them in an informed manner is a core element to the delivery of English at Penwortham Priory. Furthermore, our expectations of our pupils are extremely high. Pupils are constantly encouraged to reflect upon their own work and to always seek to improve once given feedback. Modelling, quality teacher explanation and questioning, proofreading and editing are fundamental components of our curriculum as they ensure that pupils continue to make progress across all years.

Across both key stages, pupils are exposed to an array of fiction texts (including the use of 'umbrella texts'), non-fiction texts and poetry from different cultures. Writing for specific audiences and purposes also accounts for a significant portion of our curriculum time.

The essential ingredients of English lessons at Penwortham Priory might include:

- Structured in-depth and mature discussion and formal debate.
- Use of whiteboards to encourage participation and address misconceptions.
- The use of hinge questions (seen as 'Learning Questions' in our booklets) to assess that all learners have mastered key points of learning before moving on and, subsequently, providing the opportunity to revisit these if required.
- The use of 'think, pair, share' to allow pupils to rehearse and share ideas (and develop confidence) before sharing them in a whole class context.
- Quality modelling and co-writing class responses (through 'I Do, We Do, You Do').
- The use of active reading and ARC to support pupils to explore challenging texts.
- Low stakes testing and interleaving and retrieval of prior knowledge.

- The use of 'ABC Oracy', where pupils have structured discussion, encouraging them to 'Answer' questions, 'Build' on each other's views and 'Challenge' different perspectives.
- Quality questioning and explanation of challenging concepts which seek to explore pupils' way of thinking as well as extending their thinking.
- Teaching that responds to the need of all pupils.

Lessons

Year 7	4 Hours Per Week + 1 Hour Reading Plus
Year 8	4 Hours Per Week + 1 Hour Reading Plus
Year 9	4 Hours Per Week + 1 Hour Reading Plus
Year 10	5 Hours Per Week
Year 11	5 Hours Per Week

Impact

During this year of transition we do not currently have GCSE result which demonstrate the impact of our curriculum. The GCSE results of the 2024 cohort will also not accurately reflect the implementation of all of our curriculum changes however, we feel that GCSE results of the 2025 and subsequent cohorts will provide an increasingly more accurate indication of the success of our implementation.