

English Learning Area Information

The English Learning Area comprises English Language and English Literature across the school Key Stages and the teaching of Media Studies in KS4, leading to Film Studies in KS5.

High quality, engaging and dynamic teaching and learning is the foundation of the philosophy of teaching within this learning area and we are looking to recruit a high-quality member of staff who will lead the learning area's contribution to ensuring that all students leave Oldfield School achieving the very best that they can. This is an ideal position for those seeking to develop their leadership skills in the environment of a supportive and high-achieving department.

The team is based in three different areas in the main school site, with regular access to our wonderful Library. The teaching rooms are idiosyncratic and aim to establish English as an interesting and engaging core subject through imaginative classrooms and the curriculum. The English staff room provides a place for mutual support and engagement as well as a place for planning and marking. We are a well-established and friendly team, we enjoy each other's company and are able to ask for help as well as offer help when needed.

We have twelve specialist teachers, including three who are part-time, with a range of experiences in terms of years' teaching, personal interests and pre-teaching employment and we work in a supportive and collaborative manner. Within the learning area, we currently have three TLR positions; Leader of Learning, Second of Department and KS3 Coordinator.

At KS3 all students follow a curriculum consisting of three units per year, with each unit covering a range of text types, both fiction and non-fiction, and specified language and SPaGV elements. The units are progressive and the skills build on year from year with the requirements at GCSE as our ultimate focus without being a watered down version of the GCSE curriculum. Each unit has an assessment focus and the students use booklets to record all of these, which helpfully enable us to record and review the development of individual students. Homework is established as an integral part of the unit's curriculum and is created and set across all groups and units. We do not see KS3 as a part of GCSEs, but as developing the necessary skills and building blocks for students to achieve as they progress into this area. In the recent Ofsted Inspection (2020) the English curriculum across all key stages was praised for its depth, range and development of core skills.

Students are taught in broadly mixed ability groups in Year 7. In Year 8 and 9 students are currently in mixed ability groups. In KS4 students are established in either 'top' or 'middle' groups. We start the GCSE course in terms 5 and 6 in Year 9 with more challenging texts and assessments. There is a certain amount of overlap of ability and groups are created according to potential and not behaviour. We are currently in our third year of using the Reading Plus programme for weak readers initially in year 7, after an on-line assessment of the whole year group, to establish more reliable reading ages and to assess need. The few students who are unable to access Reading Plus use the programme Flash. A number of students have been identified as having additional learning needs and will continue with Reading Plus in Years 8 and 9 instead of learning a modern foreign language. There is



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also a Reciprocal Reading programme in place and the school's Literacy Co-ordinator is an English teacher.

At A level English Language, English Literature and Film Studies are offered. The Learning Area has a strong success rate and has been a popular choice for students for many years. Oldfield Sixth Form is the natural choice for students wishing to pursue an academic post 16 route. New approaches to teaching and learning at A level are welcomed as fresh ideas are incorporated.

Obviously extra-curricular activities are a part of what we offer and something we look forward to reintroducing to our enrichment programme, but as a team we believe that the main focus of our efforts has to be in the classroom. All teaching posts come with extra-curricular activities as a part of the remit. Currently in the department we offer Debating Club with a weekly debate open to KS4 and 5 and for some of those students we take part in various local and regional debating events, usually with some success. Previously we also offered a Creative Writing Club; trips to see productions of set texts as and when we can arrange them, as well as visiting writers. During the whole school Activities Week programme English teachers offer a number of activities, such as a trip to the Warner Studios outside London, backstage events at the theatre in Bath and other loosely associated activities. We have contacts with our closest local primary schools through a writing workshop event and a Communications Day which features drama, film and writing activities aimed at Year 5 students. We also have a number of external writing competitions that we work towards with our more able students. We are keen to recruit a leader of the team who can inspire new ideas for this aspect of our work.

We work collaboratively to continue review and develop our schemes of work across the KS3 and KS4 curriculum to ensure that they are fully resourced and effective for student progress and learning. We have two trainee teachers as part of the BET programme each year. Quality assurance systems are in place with a programme of work scrutiny sessions, learning walks by the Leader of Learning and SLT. Feedback and self-reflection are considered important aspects of the development of all teachers and as such we welcome opportunities to work collaboratively within school and to work alongside other subject areas as appropriate.

The English Learning area is dynamic, successful and a real team of individuals with a common commitment to the teaching of the subjects they love.