








ALNS English Curriculum

A summary of our principles:

<p>ALNS English Curriculum</p> <p>Our curriculum is designed to give students a broad experience of a wide range of literature, woven together through thematic Schemes of Learning which take an intertextual approach. Embedded into them, across both KS3 & KS4, are the key skills required for the four different GCSE English exams. These skills have been scaffolded so that they develop progression of the key requirements in relation to the topics and texts being covered.</p>	<p>Balanced</p> <p>Our curriculum incorporates a range of different cultural, moral, spiritual, philosophical & emotional aspects, themes & ideas through the range of fiction & non-fiction texts & related contexts across students' five year learning journey.</p>	<p>Rigorous</p> <p>Our choices of texts, topics and tasks have been very carefully chosen and developed to ensure challenge, engagement and support for students of differing abilities & starting points across both key stages 3 & 4 allowing very clearly for progression in key skills.</p>	<p>Coherent</p> <p>Our curriculum has been designed to work explicitly in harmony with a range of Humanities subjects (History, RE, Psychology, Sociology), encouraging students to make connections and links between subjects and topics/themes covered across both KS3 & KS4.</p>
<p>Vertically Integrated</p> <p>Each thematic unit across each year group builds and develops the key skills required, not only for GCSE (using the key assessment objectives) but also for growing students' comprehension and analysis in line with theoretical/pedagogical (Piaget) stages of development.</p>	<p>Appropriate</p> <p>We ensure that tasks build students' confidence by being age-appropriate and accessible as well as engaging, whilst ensuring that all students are challenged, modelling excellence to all. Yet we include challenging concepts and a broad range of texts as well as choice.</p>	<p>Focused</p> <p>We teach each unit thematically so that there is an over-arching focus for each unit. Our premise is to introduce each thematic concept contextually, making connections to a wide range of texts.</p>	<p>Relevant</p> <p>Our curriculum is designed to engage students, making links to real life situations, employment opportunities and topics/ideas that are interesting and relevant to young people and the world that they are growing up in.</p>

How does our English Department incorporate ALNS Teaching Principles?

<p>Fostering a love of learning </p> <p>Our curriculum is designed to give students a broad experience of a wide range of literature, woven together through thematic Schemes of Learning which take an intertextual approach.</p> <p>We are passionate about Literature and about providing our students with opportunities that they might not otherwise experience, such as live performance, theatre trips and poetry recitals.</p> <p>We incorporate a range of learning styles to suit different learners and regularly review our Schemes of Learning taking account of student feedback so that students feel involved in their learning journey.</p>	<p>Challenge for All </p> <p>We have high expectations for our students and take a 'teach to the top' approach in mixed ability classes at both KS3 & KS4 so that all students are challenged yet supported through scaffolding of skills required to reach 'the top'.</p> <p>Our choices of texts, topics and tasks have been very carefully chosen and developed to ensure challenge, engagement and support for students of differing abilities & starting points across both key stages 3 & 4 allowing very clearly for progression in key skills.</p>	<p>Feedback for Learning </p> <p>Our students receive regular verbal and written feedback which focuses clearly on the skills required to ensure progress and success.</p> <p>We build students' confidence and skills in giving feedback to each other and to be self-reflective, building their metacognitive skills in relation to their own learning.</p> <p>Knowledge organisers and key progress indicators are used in lessons to assist students in their own self-regulation of their learning.</p>	<p>Literacy for Life </p> <p>We explicitly share key tier 2 & 3 vocabulary at the start of and during each new 'Scheme of Learning', using the Frayer model to ensure a breadth & depth of understanding of language & key terminology as well as giving students the skills to decode tricky words.</p> <p>Oracy is integral to students' learning and 'Let's Think in English' (LTE) lessons are a regular feature in KS3 learning, developing students' comprehension & metacognition as well as their oracy skills. These LTE have been utilised so that they are also incorporated into SoL at both KS3 & KS4.</p> <p>Regular reading for pleasure is incorporated into the learning for Years 7, 8 & 9 using the 'Accelerated Reader' programme.</p>
	<p>Modelling </p> <p>We ensure that tasks build students' confidence by being age-appropriate and accessible as well as engaging, whilst ensuring that all students are challenged, modelling excellence to all.</p> <p>We take an 'I do – we do – you do' approach to the modelling and learning process to build confidence & resilience.</p>	<p>Responsive teaching </p> <p>We take a responsive approach to teaching, incorporating lessons which respond to common misconceptions identified through 'Assessment for Learning' strategies which include questioning, whole class marking for specific skills at the formative stages and peer/self-assessment using clear success criteria. Interventions are swiftly incorporated to ensure that progress is maximised.</p>	<p>Stickability </p> <p>Our Schemes of Learning incorporate a range of strategies, such as a thematic approach, interleaving, spaced learning & cognitive tagging to support the 'stickability' of students' learning.</p> <p>Our curriculum has been designed to work explicitly in harmony with several topics across the Humanities Department to encourage students making links and to more deeply embed information and ideas into their long-term memory.</p>

Curriculum **English**

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."
- Maya Angelou

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."
— Albert Einstein

"If you don't like someone's story, write your own."
- Chinua Achebe

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."
— Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Curriculum Implementation

The English Curriculum is designed to give students a broad experience of a wide range of challenging literature (thematically and technically) which is woven together through Schemes of Learning which have been designed to be thematic in their focus and which take



an intertextual approach. Embedded into our Schemes of Learning across both Key Stages 3 and 4 are the key skills required for the four different GCSE exams. These skills have been scaffolded so that they develop progression of the key requirements in relation to the topics and texts being covered.

Our Vision

Our vision for English is that, by placing culture and curiosity as well as learning at the centre of everything we do, we continually reflect upon the world that we live in and the place that English Language & Literature have in our world, as well as reflecting upon developing our own practice and seeking opportunities to enhance teaching and learning.

Our purpose is to inspire and motivate students, fostering a love of all things English and broadening and enriching their minds and hearts. We want to cultivate critical thinkers for life who can see the relevance of English Language and Literature in relation to their lives. We aim for our curriculum to be one which empowers students, creates opportunities for them and enables them to see themselves, in relation to the world around them, as global citizens and to be 'better people'.

We deliver a varied and creative curriculum, allowing all students the opportunities to flourish. Through the teaching of transferrable skills and strategies, we enable students to achieve in our subject and others, as well as in their lives beyond school.

We aim to empower our students to become effective independent learners through supportive, skills-based feedback and next steps, swift interventions, and responsive teaching which, together, develop students' skills and challenge them to aspire beyond their expected progress.

Our principles behind our approach to English lessons:

We want to:

- Take an 'intertextual' approach to English, encouraging students to make links between different styles and types of texts which have been written and used across different periods of time, reflecting changing attitudes, a range of purposes and different audiences.
- Take a multi-modal approach to learning so that students maximise their use of ICT facilities available, such as the Google Classroom, Google Docs, (moving towards use of MS265, MSTeams, etc), & Kahoot, as well as using (and creating) moving images, dramatic performances, pictures and photographs alongside written texts.
- Be responsive in our teaching so that we swiftly intervene to address misconceptions.
- Encourage students to be able to use transferable skills: skills that can be utilised, reinforced and remembered in other lessons across the curriculum.
- Enrich students' experience of English, providing challenge for all as well as fostering their love of learning and giving them literacy skills which they can use throughout their lives.
- Provide a clear sense of purpose to tasks, making them 'real' and relevant to their everyday lives and, thus, supporting the 'stickability' of what they are learning.
- Encourage students to take ownership of their own learning through their response to feedback, therefore building confidence, independence and resilience as learners.



How is the Curriculum planned?

The English Curriculum is planned to build a broad understanding of a wealth of texts in a wide range of different forms: articles, novels (& extracts from novels), letters, speeches, poetry and so on. These texts span the Literary Canon from the sixteenth century through to the twenty-first century. Most texts span the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries,

covering both fiction and non-fiction. In addition, students study at least three of Shakespeare's plays across their five years.

Texts and assessments have been planned to build key skills relating to the GCSE success criteria: comprehension, synthesis, comparison, contextual links, writers' methods and intentions.

All students will gain these experiences through:

- Thematic Schemes of Learning which, whilst focusing on key texts, embrace a range of different texts exploring the key themes in differing styles, forms and from a range of different times, offering an array of differing perspectives and viewpoints. This will, therefore, enrich their engagement in English Language and Literature through a more intertextual approach.
- Disciplinary Literacy and *Let's Read* embedded into lessons at Key Stage 3.
- *Let's Think in English* pedagogical approach which develop students' cognitive development through group work, discussion and questioning.
- Development of students' cultural capital and literacy skills to secure both their basic levels of comprehension and deeper understanding of texts.
- A progressive approach to the curriculum and the key skills required for GCSE so that students are able to embed and develop their comprehension and analytical skills as they progress through the key stages. Within our tailored curriculum across key stages 3 and 4, texts are challenging, incorporating a range of forms from different centuries, yet scaffolded so that students can develop confidence as they progress.



How is the curriculum planned to be linked explicitly to relevant learning in other subjects and to the context of their lives?

The content of the English Curriculum directly supports key content in Humanities' subjects, such as the teaching of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in Year 8 using a range of literary and non-literary fiction and non-fiction, complementing the Year 8 History curriculum. In addition, key concepts such as the human condition in Year 10, explored before studying *Lord of the Flies* and considering the practices of eminent social psychologists, such as Philip Zimbardo and Stanley Milgram, and their recognised experiments, such as the Stanford Prison Experiment and the Milgram Experiment, again support content and concepts from the Psychology GCSE. Ideas about society, societal issues, such as social class, woven into the English curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4 (in particular) complement the curriculum content in Sociology. In addition, culture and religion, not only link well with Sociology but also Religious Education. Collaboration with Science has focused on key vocabulary which is common to both English and Science as a means of supporting stickability and development

of students' confidence in expressing themselves articulately and clearly, as well as improving comprehension skills.

In all cases, our intention to broaden students' depth and breadth of knowledge of the world that they live in, developing their enquiring minds and deepening their understanding of concepts pertinent to their lives, is at the core of every Scheme of Learning. Thus, in Schemes of Learning, such as Year 9's *Myths & Legends*, modern poetry from the recent Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, is explored alongside Greek Mythology, further deepening students' cultural capital together with their awareness of topical issues such as feminism and patriarchy in society. Furthermore, philosophical thinking has been woven into Schemes of Learning, again addressing and engaging concepts which can be applied to all and any texts studied.

Curriculum Links with Humanities

Year Group	Humanities	English
Year 7	History: Elizabeth I and Elizabethan theatre	Summer Term: Historical & cultural contextual connections can be made to Elizabeth I & Elizabethan theatre when studying 'Love & Conflict' Scheme of Learning (SoL) - <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> .
Year 8	History: Holocaust & Anti-Semitism – also Religious Education (which is now covered in Ethics and Philosophy)	Summer Term: <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> – anti-Semitism – treatment of Jews across time.
Year 9	History: USA 1930-2000	Autumn Term: 'Finding My Voice' SoL – we will add journalistic article/s on the Wall St Crash, entering World War II, The American Dream in 1950s and Protests/MLK in 1960s. Students study 'America's dream' & 1930s America in Year 8 so this will have introduced 1930s America to them already in English before they study it in Year 9 in History.
Year 10	History: Medicine & Nazi Germany Psychology Sociology RE (Malthusian Theory – could be linked to Maths... he was an Economist)	Autumn Term: 'Civilisation & Savagery' SoL – <i>Lord of the Flies</i> . Historical context of WWII (Hitler & Nazis) is studied in relation to the concept of 'man's capacity for evil'/the human condition and the nature/nurture argument. We explore these in relation to the social psychologist, Philip Zimbardo's ideas and his Stanford Prison experiment. Also, Stanley Milgram's experiment – both of which link to Psychology. Exploration of the text in relation to social class/the class structure which links to Sociology. Spring Term: 'Responsibility, Redemption & Reconciliation' SoL – <i>A Christmas Carol</i> – social, historical and cultural context links are made in relation to social class, reform & Poor Laws. Attitudes of the rich, linked to the economist

		Thomas Robert Malthus (Malthusian theory). Some links to Sociology. <i>London</i> – social unrest (& London riots – link to Sociology)
Year 11	History: Germany & Elizabeth I	Autumn Term: 'Power & Conflict' – <i>Macbeth</i> – historical, social & contextual connections to post Elizabethan era (Jacobean period) and theatre in this period (links to Elizabeth I in History). James I & the Gunpowder plot (just post Elizabethan period). Across the year: revision lessons for <i>Lord of the Flies</i> – links to WWII (History) and to Psychology & Sociology (as above for year 10). This also applies to <i>A Christmas Carol</i> revision lessons across the year. <i>Kamikaze</i> – Pearl Harbour (WWII)

How is the curriculum delivered?

The English Curriculum is delivered using a range of pedagogical approaches. Key skills and topics are taught thematically rather than in isolation so that skills and aspects of the range of texts are revisited regularly, through questioning, quizzes, active registers, 'Quick Six' and other 'Do Now' starter tasks, to support 'stickability'.

Students are assessed regularly, using formative, peer and summative assessments, as outlined in our Assessment Policy. In addition, each Scheme of Learning has specific assessments – with choices and a range of assessment opportunities – clearly outlined in each Scheme of Learning. Within each Scheme of Learning, according to the year group, the assessments are designed to build key skills appropriate to the particular stage of students' learning.

Feedback from teachers, focuses on specific skills from the Key Stage 3 and 4 Programmes of Study and GCSE Assessment Objectives, all of which underpin all Schemes of Learning.

The importance of reading and vocabulary acquisition are also at the core of our curriculum. Thus, texts are carefully selected to ensure that students receive a breadth and depth of topics and that they are appropriately challenged, whilst being engaged, building confidence, comprehension skills and strategies. Equally, teachers model and encourage students to be more specific, academic and sophisticated with their vocabulary. A range of strategies are incorporated into lessons and Schemes of Learning, such as use of the Frayer model for defining key vocabulary, etymology 'word webs' to help students explore lexical patterns and meanings, glossaries and 'word of the week' as well as the use of dictionaries and thesauruses being integral tools in lessons.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum begins in the second half of year 9 to build students' depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in relation to the AQA Power & Conflict Anthology of Poetry which, in turn, allows for a greater exploration of contextual links and building of cultural

capital as well as creating opportunities for a more creative, interactive approach to the teaching and learning of key poems. Students use their explorations of key poems as a springboard for the completion of their GCSE Spoken Language Assessment which is in the second half of the summer term.

Key Pedagogies

The English Curriculum draws upon pedagogical approaches which support the development of students' learning, comprehension, application and recall of key ideas within the curriculum that they are studying. These include the pedagogical approaches below – and others as detailed in the English Department Handbook.

Teachers as the specialist

We pride ourselves on being English teachers who are passionate about our subject and who have a wealth of knowledge and expertise to share and develop our students' knowledge and their own passion and interest in English. We are dynamic in our approach to our own reflective practice and we recognise the important role that the teacher has as a subject expert.

Constructivism

Constructivist theory is linked to Piaget and Vygotsky's theoretical approaches to learning. Constructivism in teaching recognises the student as a learner and the knowledge that they bring to the lesson. It places the teacher as facilitator and the student takes an active role in their learning. Strategies such as the teacher establishing what students already know (to build on their prior knowledge), recognising different backgrounds and cultures of learners, creating learners who seek to ask questions and find solutions, creating activities which encourage students' enthusiasm for their learning are all broadly constructivist.

Flipped Learning

Flipped Learning puts greater focus on the pre-learning which takes place prior to the lesson so that the lesson can focus on applying the knowledge. Flipped Learning creates opportunities with students' independent learning before their lesson. It requires careful planning to ensure that the learning/application in the lesson builds on the learning that has taken place prior to the lesson. (It is important to have strategies in place for students who have not completed the task for IL).

Interleaving

Teaching the English Curriculum through interleaving (mixing) both Language and Literature skills and through making connections between the texts and exam papers, rather than teaching them in a 'blocked' way. Interleaving has been shown to be more effective than blocked practice for developing the skills of categorization and problem solving; interleaving also leads to better long-term retention and improved ability to transfer learned knowledge.

Cognitive psychologists believe that interleaving improves the brain's ability to differentiate, or discriminate, between concepts and strengthens memory associations.

ABC: Add, Build, Challenge.

To avoid the 'table tennis approach' to whole class discussion (back and forth between teacher and individual student), students are encouraged to use 'ABC', the 'basketball approach', enabling discussion to go across the classroom between students.

Metacognition

The development of students' cognitive knowledge and regulation:

- Their own knowledge of themselves as a learner and the factors affecting their cognition (person & task knowledge; self-appraisal)
- Their awareness and management of cognition, including knowledge about strategies (procedural & strategy knowledge)
- Their knowledge about why and when to use a given strategy (conditional knowledge)
- Their identification and selection of appropriate strategies and allocation of resources (planning)
- Their awareness of their own comprehension and task performance (monitoring/regulating; cognitive experiences)
- Their assessment of the process and products of their own learning; revisiting and revising goals (evaluating)

This metacognitive approach is evident through our use of modelling, including live and shared writing. Students are also encouraged to reflect on the strategies that they have used and what has worked for them. They are given tasks to carry out such as transforming text into pictures, summarising full texts into 20 words and explaining how specific approaches have supported or hindered their learning. They are also encouraged to evaluate their own (and others') learning.

Thinking Hard

Thinking Hard is at the heart of excellent classroom practice and students who engage in learning and think hard achieve well and progress. With the advent of more challenging curricula across all key stages and examination reform, practical strategies to develop depth of understanding are more essential than ever for students of all abilities. We want to encourage students so that, not only are they prepared for the challenges of more rigorous exams but also for their real-life application of their skills and knowledge so that they are able to be ambitious in their destinations for the future.

One of the main things that distinguish expert teachers is challenge in the classroom¹.

Robert Coe when defining learning says it “...happens when people have to think hard”², so the question becomes: how can I increase the amount of thinking for all in my classroom without increasing my workload?

There are four key approaches that can support deep thought in the classroom **two** of which we will focus on. Each of these follow the maxim: **high thinking; low planning**:

1. Thinking Hard Process: Knowledge, understanding, analysis and flexibility
2. Effective explanations: analogy, role modelling, worked examples.
3. Think-pair-share: question technique to get students thinking and talking in a focused way.
4. Assessment and feedback: including test, feedback, Retest.

Thinking Hard Process – Knowledge, understanding, analysis and flexibility

The **Thinking Hard Process** moves student engagement with essential information from passive to active interactions.

Knowledge and Understanding by reducing (e.g. a paragraph to 12 key words) and transforming (e.g. change this text into a diagram – no words) information focuses students to think hard and understand the content and gives teachers the opportunity to check essential knowledge.

Analysis by prioritising (e.g. Diamond 9) and categorising (e.g. group together questions that require the same technique to answer) allows students to make sense of the information that open up the highest GCSE grades that feature throughout examination questions.

Flexibility by extending (e.g. how is this similar/different to X? What question do we need to ask now?) allows students to make connections across a range of topics and subjects and enables them to tackle questions that require application of knowledge in new situations.

Think-Pair-Share – Transform classroom thinking

A shift away from ‘hands up’ questioning to a model that promotes wait time, depth of discussion, dynamic classroom dialogue, audible thinking and experimentation of ideas.

Let’s Think in English

Let’s Think in English is a teaching programme to help young people develop the reasoning skills needed for success in English. As soon as they have learned how to decode letters, words and sentences, they need to develop higher-order reading skills such as inference,

¹ Hattie, John (2003) “*Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?*” Australian Council for Educational Research Annual Conference; 15-16

² Coe, Robert (2013) “*Improving education : A Triumph of Hope over Experience*”
<http://www.cem.org/attachments/publications/ImprovingEducation2013.pdf>; 14-15

deduction and analysis. This gradually leads through the key stages to the ability to recognise and discuss how language can be used to create features such as characterisation, mood, tone, pace and irony and how texts can be structured for various effects.

Let's Think in English draws on research by Piaget and Vygotsky that young people learn best when exploring ideas together. The lessons are based on structured challenge and include the development of understanding through discussion (social construction), problem-solving (cognitive challenge) and structured reflection (metacognition) which makes pupils more aware of their thinking processes and how they think most effectively.

Chromebooks

Within the delivery of our English lessons, as well as the completion of tasks and assessment of work in exercise books & progress books, we are further incorporating the use of Chromebooks for a range of activities, such as dictionary & thesaurus work, use of support resources from our 'Wonderwall', research, peer assessment, collaborative writing, quizzes and some reading tasks. Details are outlined in our 'Chromebook commitment to parents' document.

All lessons during the covid pandemic were recorded and shared via the Google Classroom. These lessons & resources are available for students to use during lessons and, through the use of Chromebooks & the Google Classroom, google docs and other resources are incorporated into learning within the classroom. However, as we move towards converting our lessons and shared resources to the MS265 platform so we will share video resources and powerpoints in this way to support those who cannot be in the classroom, as well as supporting learners in lessons and for other independent study.

How is the curriculum assessed?

Teachers use a range of assessment strategies within lessons, between lessons, within units in Schemes of Learning and at the end of units. For example, questioning is a valuable strategy used to assess comprehension within the lesson to ensure understanding and to create challenge. Knowledge Organisers with Key Success Criteria are used to focus on key skills. As PiXL School, we draw on resources available to support students' independence and ownership of their own learning - this includes the use of resources such as the *Know-it, Grasp-it, Think-it* 'mats' so that students can take ownership of their strengths and areas for development.

Regular, explicit use of success criteria helps to ensure that students are clear about the expectations for their final assessments. These are 'unpicked' along with modelled examples, which are also used to create success criteria. In addition, live modelling and shared written and verbal responses are all used during the development phases of learning to aid progression. The sharing of Written Learning Targets, focusing on key skills, along with regular written and verbal 'next steps' tailors the learning for individual needs.

Formative written and verbal feedback is recorded in students' drafting books and in teachers' data/intervention folders (as well as on Department Trackers, as appropriate), with some feedback (using the 'Michaela's Way' approach) which is recorded on a single sheet and guidance is then given via powerpoint targets for differentiated needs. This approach also helps to ensure more regular feedback, and the teacher responding to whole class needs to inform therapy and intervention required, whilst tailoring follow-up lessons to specific misconceptions and allowing the teacher to focus on key students, as well as identifying strengths which can be shared and celebrated.

Peer assessment strategies focus on key skills, further building students' knowledge of success criteria – skills and mark schemes – so that feedback given to each other is specific and mostly relevant. Strategies such as 'caterpillar marking' and 'tickled pink & yellow boxes' are used by students as part of their peer assessment.

Teacher assessment follows the English Assessment Policy, using the Next Steps stickers and allowing students time to respond to next steps and feedforward. Next steps are also then fed-forward into learning objectives to ensure highly personalised learning and to create a dynamic approach to students' learning, which is always both reflective and forward-thinking.

Assessment is used to identify misconceptions, as well as to identify individual and whole class strengths and areas for further development and focus.
