



St Mary's Catholic School

English Department

The department occupies a suite of 9 classrooms. Each classroom is equipped with a state of the art Smartboard linked to a desktop computer. The desktop is linked to a classroom speaker system. There is also a standard whiteboard in each room. The department has a set of portable netbooks available to staff on a booking basis. The department share resources and work collaboratively to produce comprehensive SOWs at each key stage.

The English Department is made up of a team of enthusiastic teachers who aim to give their students the best possible experience in Language and Literature. There are currently 14 members of staff in the department – 10 are full time and 4 are part time. There is a Head of Department and two Deputy Heads of Department. 1 member of the department is a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, 1 member of the department is a Spirituality Coordinator and 1 member is on the Senior Leadership Team. As a teaching school, St Mary's hosts many ITT students on PGCE and Schools Direct routes, and the department values the opportunity to nurture trainee teachers through this work.



English
Department

Aerial model of the school

English is a thriving and successful department and achievement is strong at all key stages. Recent highlights include:-

Key Stage 5

- 44% A* or A grades in A Level English Literature in 2023, with 78% achieving at least a grade B

- 72% of pupils achieved at least a Grade B in English Language in over the last 5 years, with 41% achieving a Grade A* or A

Key Stage 4

- 86% of pupils achieved at least Grade 4 in English in 2023, with 77% achieving a Grade 5
- Consistently outstanding English Progress 8 scores, an average of +0.56, placing the school in the top 3 in the North East across the last 5 examined years (2017-2019 and 2022-2023)

Key Stage 3

- Key Stage 3 is exceptionally strong too, with very able cohorts coming through
- Leadership, teaching and the climate for learning in English are all strong
- An excellent curriculum is in place

The English Department also offers a vibrant programme of activities outside of lessons that students can get involved in. There is a well-attended reading club, scrabble club and kindle club as well as other exciting new extra-curricular opportunities. The department regularly works with the school librarian, organising author visits and participation in the North East Teenage Book Awards. Enrichment activities such as theatre visits and study sessions are also arranged regularly.

Setting Arrangements

In Year 7 students are set using a mixture of Key Stage 2 data from feeder primary schools as well as CAT scores taken in the first term. For the Key Stage 3 course, the students are grouped by ability across split bands.

For the GCSE programmes in Key Stage 4, the students are also grouped by ability.

Sets are reviewed every term and updated using students' assessment performance. Class size in KS3 are typically 30 pupils in sets 1 and 2, 25 in sets 3 and 4 and 15 in set 5. GCSE classes follow the same pattern. We currently have 4 A level classes of mixed ability students.

KS3

Key Stage 3 provision is currently 6 x 1 hour lessons per 2-week cycle in Y7 and Y8 and 7 hours in Y9.

Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 study from a range of texts including Shakespeare, Poetry, texts from the English Literary Canon and Non-Fictional texts. Year 7 students currently study a range of texts including Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', "The Woman in Black" by Susan Hill, and a selection of poetry and dystopic fiction. In Year 8, students currently study a range of texts including Shakespeare's 'Henry V', War Poetry, nineteenth century crime fiction and 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell. In Year 9, students currently study a range of texts including Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Great Expectations' by Charles Dickens, a Modern text and Non-Fiction. There are comprehensive schemes of work and resources for all modules covered. Each scheme of work provides for structured learning and regular assessment. Students are encouraged to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of English using varied approaches to learning.

KS4

Year 10 and 11 students have between 7 and 9 hours of English per 2 week cycle. The Department follows the new AQA Language and Literature courses. Students currently study 'A Christmas Carol', 'An Inspector Calls' 'DNA', 'Power and Conflict', 'Worlds and Lives' and 'Love and Relationships' poetry and Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', in addition to a range of pre-19th century and contemporary non-fiction and fiction texts. Students sit 2 exams for English Language and 2 for Literature at the end of Year 11; assessment is 100% examination.

KS5

The department currently offers A Level English Language and English Literature. Key Stage 5 provision is currently 10 x 1 hour lessons per 2-week cycle per subject. This time is split equally between two members of staff.

In Literature, students follow English Literature Spec B course, studying 'King Lear', 'Richard II', 'The Great Gatsby', Ian McEwan's 'Atonement' and a selection of Poetry.

Language students follow the AQA Specification. Assessment is on-going with students sitting a mock exam in Years 12 and 13 with grades reported home.

In Film Studies, students follow the WJEC Equcas specification. They study a broad range of films and genres such as Trainspotting, City of God, Pan's Labyrinth, Casablanca and Mulholland Drive