



Vision

At the heart of the English Department at Nether Stowe School lies a profound commitment to cultivating a community of learners who embody the key virtues of being **respectful**, **ambitious**, and **resilient**. Our vision is not only to impart literary knowledge and language skills but to shape individuals who are prepared to flourish in a rapidly evolving world while remaining grounded in their humanity and empathy.

In education and society, **respectful** engagement is the cornerstone of every interaction. Through thought-provoking discussions, exploring diverse perspectives, and active listening, we foster an environment that values and celebrates the differences that enrich our literary experiences. Our students learn not only to express their ideas eloquently but also to engage with the ideas of others with open-mindedness and respect.

Being **ambitious** is the driving force that propels students beyond the boundaries of their comfort zones. We encourage them to explore a wide spectrum of literary genres, cultures, and historical periods. Our curriculum challenges students to think critically, question assumptions, and approach texts with intellectual curiosity. Through ambitious exploration, students discover their own unique voices and develop the confidence to contribute in a critical, thoughtful manner.

The journey of studying literature is often one of encountering challenges and grappling with complex concepts. At Nether Stowe School, we view these challenges as opportunities for growth. We instill in our students the virtue of being **resilient** – the ability to persist in the face of difficulties. Through analysing intricate narratives, studying intriguing characters, and confronting difficult themes, students develop the resilience needed not only for academic success but also for navigating the complexities of life.

Intent

During Key Stage 3, the main emphasis is on building upon the key skills and knowledge from KS2 whilst also constructing the foundational knowledge needed for GCSE and A Level. This comes from fostering a deep appreciation for various forms of the English language. Our approach involves the implementation of English Mastery, a challenging curriculum designed to offer a knowledge-rich learning experience. This framework aids teachers in assessing student progress, effectively sequencing English lessons, and guiding them throughout Key Stage 3. The curriculum rests upon four educational principles derived from cognitive and pedagogical research. These principles prioritise the accumulation of knowledge, targeted grammar instruction, systematic teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary, and encouraging a love of reading.

Upon entering Key Stage 4, all students undertake the study of both AQA GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. This curriculum covers a wide range of texts, spanning contemporary works to literary classics. The focal point remains on honing students' abilities in academic, creative, and practical writing. This process involves building upon the foundational knowledge acquired in Key Stage 3 and encouraging students to delve into the core concepts and intentions of the prescribed texts. Throughout Key Stage 4, we also explore how the societal and historical backgrounds contribute to our interpretation of these texts. We empower students to independently respond to and formulate their own perspectives on the literature, all while employing scholarly language to articulate their thoughts.

For those pupils who progress into KS5, pupils can choose to study English Literature or Media. Both subjects explore complex concepts, impart specialised knowledge, and develop key skills which prepare pupils for higher education, employment and their adult lives in general.

Incorporating reading as a cornerstone of our curriculum is of paramount importance. Reading not only serves as a fundamental skill for academic success but also cultivates a deeper understanding of language, culture, and critical thinking. Through engaging with a diverse range of literary works, students develop vocabulary, comprehension, and language fluency that extends beyond the classroom. Moreover, reading exposes students to various perspectives, historical contexts, and social issues, fostering empathy and a broader worldview. Through analysing complex texts, students refine their analytical and interpretive abilities, honing skills that are indispensable across subjects and in real-world situations. By nurturing a love for reading, the English curriculum empowers students to become lifelong learners, creative thinkers, and effective communicators, all while enriching their personal growth and academic journey.

Implementation

The curriculum has been sequenced to build upon the prior learning of pupils and provide challenge to facilitate further progress. This ensures that students acquire the necessary abilities to effectively engage with a variety of enriching texts. As they progress through the key stages, the complexity of the texts increases and appropriately challenges pupils as a result.

Key Stage 3 (KS3):

In Year 7, the journey starts with an exploration of 'Oliver Twist', delving into life in Victorian London and Charles Dickens' portrayal of Victorian society. The Spring term is dedicated to the study of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', allowing students to explore life in Elizabethan England and Ancient Athens. The Summer term introduces students to an anthology of poetry and ancient tales.

Year 8 commences with the study of 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes', building upon their existing knowledge of the Victorian era. During the Spring term, students engage with 'The Tempest' to enhance their understanding of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan age. As the Summer term arrives, the focus shifts to 'Animal Farm' and rhetoric.

Moving on to Year 9, students are introduced to 'Jane Eyre', solidifying their grasp of Victorian life and the historical context. Progressing into Spring, the exploration shifts to 'Small Island', where themes of Windrush, colonialism, and multicultural Britain are examined. In the Summer term, students revisit poetry through a diverse anthology before transitioning to Reading for Study which involves transactional writing.

Key Stage 4 (KS4):

During the GCSE English Literature program, students revisit prose, drama, Shakespeare, and poetry, all of which they are already familiar with from their KS3 experience. This familiarity aids them in confidently tackling the challenges posed by 19th-century English literature. For instance, when studying 'A Christmas Carol', students are well-equipped with a comprehensive understanding of Victorian society. Pupils study the following texts in relation to the AQA English Literature specification: 'Romeo and Juliet' (by William Shakespeare), 'A Christmas Carol' (by Charles Dickens) and 'An Inspector Calls' (by J.B. Priestley). Pupils also explore a range of poems from the AQA 'Power and Conflict' anthology whilst developing their ability to analyse unseen poetry.

In preparation for the GCSE English Language exams, students explore an array of high-quality non-fiction texts spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. These texts cover topics like school life and travel, enabling students to further refine the non-fiction reading skills developed during KS3. Additionally, they focus on refining their transactional writing skills and creative writing skills.

As a mandatory component, all students complete the GCSE Spoken Language endorsement, which involves delivering a formal presentation to the class. This requirement serves as a culmination of the speaking skills cultivated throughout KS3 and provides pupils with an important qualification that employers and further education providers value highly.

Key Stage 5 (KS5):

English Literature and Media remain popular subject choices at A Level. To prepare students for the next stage of the English study we expose students to A Level fiction texts as part of the language course of study and encourage

critical readings of the GCSE set texts. We provide ample opportunities for critical discussion and debate to demonstrate the power and passion of the subject.

Reading

Across all key stages, pupils are acquainted with a range of different texts. Primarily, this is through the study of set texts within the KS3 curriculum and KS4/5 specifications. However, pupils are encouraged to develop a passion for reading in their own time and to read around the topics they are studying. In KS3, pupils have a designated lesson every fortnight which focuses on reading, oracy and literacy.

Impact

Assessment is conducted routinely throughout the department as part of the overall school policy involving progress checks and milestones. Progress checks evaluate recent classroom learning, while milestones appraise both new and prior learning, helping teachers and students ascertain the retention of taught material. Subsequent to completing these checks and milestones, students will revise and enhance their work using green pen, enabling them to act upon the feedback given by their teacher. Any common misunderstandings are collectively addressed at this stage. The assessment data also aids teachers in determining whether specific content requires revisiting in class, potentially using alternate approaches to ensure that all pupils have understood the key information or concept which has been delivered.

'Do Now Activities' (DNAs) are frequently used as retrieval exercises and to gauge the impact of home learning. Low-stakes testing is utilised to reinforce knowledge retrieval with stretch tasks typically building upon concepts previously taught in past subjects or recent lessons. The intention is to fortify students' long-term memory of crucial knowledge necessary for them to make progress. Should it become apparent that fundamental knowledge hasn't been retained, teachers can arrange opportunities to re-teach the content using a different approach to address any gaps identified.

'Red Zone' activities are used regularly across all year groups in order to give the pupils the opportunity to complete independent practice and this also gives teachers the opportunity to assess whether or not the learning over the most recent lessons has had the desired impact with the class. Teachers reflect on the work produced by students during 'Red Zone' tasks in order to potentially make changes to future lessons, which are delivered to further increase the impact of the learning taking place.

Within lessons, teachers regularly use questioning in order to assess the impact of the learning upon the class. This allows another opportunity for pupils to check the understanding of pupils and to allow lessons to be reflected on or altered in the future to further improve the learning experience. Peer and self-assessment can be used following 'Red Zone' activities so students get the opportunity to independently reflect on their progress.