

## Walton Hall Academy

### English Curriculum Overview

At Walton Hall Academy, Literacy skills are an integral part of learning across all subjects. Through all lessons and at all levels, literacy skills are encouraged and promoted so that the skills taught in specific English lessons can be applied, practiced and consolidated effectively.

#### Key Stage 3

In KS3 we have 5 differentiated English classes which include complex needs, additional needs, Group 3, Group 2 and Group 1. We are able to teach English in the way that best meets the needs of the students. In the complex needs class the students follow a very sensory based English programme which uses all the physical senses and links it to developing language and communication skills.

In the Additional Needs Class we build upon the basic communication skills through speaking and listening, reading, and writing, ensuring that we use as many real life, sensory and action filled activities as possible. This ensures that our students are interested, remain focused and purposeful.

The remaining groups work on gradually developing higher level skills over a three year rolling programme using more formal but also exciting ways of teaching. We aim to enable students to make as much progress as possible in preparation for accessing the KS4 POS.

In Groups 1,2 and 3 in Key Stage 3, we believe that it is vital that we not only teach children to read and to write with competence, confidence and as much independence as possible, but that we *inspire* and *stimulate* them so that they **want** to read and write, and so that both activities bring them happiness and fulfilment.

To achieve this, we

1. Choosing exciting, unusual and quirky texts to enhance our teaching; dreaming up relevant and genuinely stimulating contexts through which to approach non-fiction texts;
2. Draw on a mixture of short and sustained activities which involve both collaboration with peers and individual endeavour;
3. Embedding rigorous and well-structured grammar/punctuation exercises within each 2/3 week unit, ensuring that these are relevant to children because they are linked to the content of the unit.
4. Providing a clear progression in grammar, punctuation and spelling over the three year, breaking this down into yearly, termly and then weekly components so that each unit incorporates the necessary elements. This ensures that teachers can be confident that they are covering the required grammar/punctuation and spelling sections of the National Curriculum for all Year groups without allowing these aspects to dominate, or reducing the exciting and stimulating parts which will keep motivation high and interest strong.
5. Including within every unit of work the newly stressed aspects of the curriculum such as children regularly reading aloud to their peers and teachers in class and also learning by heart poems, rhymes and other suitable texts.

Because we have made it our priority to produce teaching and learning which stimulate, excite and inspire children to speak, to respond, to read and to write, we have made particular and strenuous efforts to make sure that the resources are of the highest quality. We use Hamilton Trust who employ their own illustrators, and produce their own texts for group reading, which is now a specified facet of every unit of work. In addition, we provide grammar and punctuation exercises within every unit, where their relation to the subject-matter makes their relevance to children's writing much more immediate.

## Key Stage 4

We have three teaching groups for English in Key Stage 4. One of these is for our Additional Needs groups and the other two (Yellow and Green) are ability set across the key stage. This enables lessons to be differentiated and set appropriate to the needs and levels of students.

English in key stage 4 is an important transition between the broad and dynamic curriculum in key stage 3 and the functional life skills that are developed in key stage 5. Learners follow the Cambridge Progression Accreditation provided by OCR. The qualification runs from Entry level 1 to Level 2. Due to the modular format students are able to sit exams at different levels, depending on their strengths and weakness in various skills. Many learners will sit speaking and listening exams at level 1 (equivalent to GCSE D-G) and reading and writing exams at Entry level 2 (pre GCSE); these learners would achieve a Level 1 certificate at the end of key stage 4.

Each learner is given a personalised learning plan, which indicates which exams they will be sitting, and identifies their strengths and weaknesses in English. Planning is driven by the learners and tailored to the needs and preferences. Learners enjoy the dynamic use of the interactive whiteboard, and the audience response system (known as clickers).

There is a real focus on filling the gaps in learners' knowledge of grammar. This ensures that learners will become confident in their own reading and writing abilities and they can develop the confidence to apply these skills later in life. Learners develop meta-cognition and responsibility for identifying their learning needs. They are also allowed elements of choice in their tasks, which again helps to promote meta-cognition and independence.

Although the focus is on developing the fundamental skills of reading and writing, there are many opportunities to learn how literature can touch the soul. Through the use of poetry and short stories, learners are able to debate emotive issues and express preferences. Linguistic devices are explored through examples by classic authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Hans Christian Anderson. Staff in key stage 4 are passionate about inspiring our learners to expand their minds and plan for the future.

"It's really fun and it makes me feel confident" A year 10 learner.

Our additional needs group follow communication units from the ASDAN Personal Progress qualification and lessons are delivered through daily morning communication sessions, sensory stories and writing write dance.

## Key Stage 5

English in Post 16 is an integral part of the curriculum and a highly valued tool that we believe all our learners should be equipped with to the highest possible standard. We aim to achieve this by consolidating previous learning and building on skills, knowledge and experience already within a student's understanding and guiding them to a level of attainment appropriate for their future needs, whether that be work, training or supported living.

Regular assessment ensures that students are working to their full potential, in ability set groups where they can access the most appropriate curriculum style and content. This is provided through schemes of work that are designed to be flexible enough to reflect the individual needs of the learner, from Pre-Entry Level to Level 1.

All our schemes of work reflect the most current accreditation pathways such as Functional Skills, and Personal Progress, ensuring access and achievement for every student. They cover the elements of Speaking & Listening, Reading and Writing, all of which are presented in a format that are designed to engage the learner, facilitate progress and promote life skills, independence and self-esteem.

Learning tasks centre on contextual themes that are within the experience of the learner, e.g. independent living, preparing for work, leisure time, etc. These themes are underpinned with basic skills practice and allow opportunities for students to follow an independent study route where appropriate.

Qualifications are a major part of the English curriculum and are highly valued by students and future providers. Where these are out of reach we ensure that accreditation in other forms is made available to celebrate the achievements of all.