

Statement of Intent - English

“What’s past is prologue” – William Shakespeare

Central to our Key Stage 5 English Literature curriculum at All Saints is the ability for students to debate and criticise how well societies have prioritised “Living Well Together with Dignity, Faith and Hope”. In AS English Literature, the central theme of Love enables students to explore how romantic, familial and societal attitudes towards race, gender and class have affected societies that have preceded ours. By undertaking a new Historicist approach to literature, students are able to evaluate the nuanced, cumulative effect of social prejudice and liberation in prose, poetry and drama. Our students leave the course with an ability to question if writers provide their audiences with dignity, faith and hope. More importantly, however, students are equipped to critique social injustice academically and implore change in their demographic.

Through exposure to both British and global heritage texts, students reflect upon the triumphs humanity has achieved and recognize the importance of the individual voice in stimulating change. We hope that through an exploration of the inspiring writers on our curriculum, students will have hope and faith that the world around them has, and can change. Central to the philosophy behind our curriculum is the belief that through empowering our students to: explore social, political and historical questions; challenge ideas and debate with their peers; and, formulate knowledge-based answers, they can live a life of dignity on the path of great authors who precede them.

Within our department, we ensure that the pupil premium grant enables all of our students to access the world-widening impact of English Language and Literature; extra-curricular trips to see live literature (from plays to visits from touring Shakespeare companies) ensure that our students have the cultural capital to develop them as well-rounded individuals. Within lessons, supported scaffolds, amended assessments and differentiated work booklets are provided to ensure that each and every one of our students, SEND, PP or High Achievers, not only progress, but are able to reach their full potential.

Year 12

Substantive Knowledge

At the start of Year 12, students are introduced to the theme of love and its connections with personal identity, relationships and societal expectations, from the Jacobean era to 1900. Students simultaneously study Othello and an AQA anthology of love poetry. In their study of Othello, students take a historicist approach to discuss the relationship between race, identity and gender in a diachronically focused manner: students consider how the racist and sexist aspects of the play were received in both the Jacobean era and modern time-periods. Students develop their understanding of the tragic genre (building on their KS4 study of Macbeth) and interleave this with literary criticism; their exploration of these elements culminates in academic essay writing. In their study of the AQA Pre-1900 love poetry anthology, students explore the representation of love over time considering how poets use form, structure and meter to protest against and reflect the periods in which they are writing.

Again, debate and discussion arises from a new Historicist perspective encouraging the students to consider how poems were the products of their eras. Once students have consolidated their introduction to Love through the Ages they then move onto a comparative study of two prose texts; namely, *Atonement* by Ian McEwan and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. In their comparative study students now focus on aspects of genre from metafiction to pilgrimage bildungsroman. Students thematically form links between the novels' explorations of class, love and conflict and the loss of innocence and female autonomy. Students demonstrate their ideas surrounding the texts through a comparative essay before applying their knowledge to an unseen extract. Finally, Year 12 finalise their first year of sixth form by undertaking their Non-Examined-Assessment – a critical comparative study of two texts. For their coursework students study *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and compare the representation of the theme (students select this themselves) with another prose or poetry collection of their choice. This enables students to consolidate their thematic, literary and comparative new historicist understanding of literature before beginning their A2 study.

Substantive Knowledge

In Key Stage 4, students honed the analysis of language and structure and interleaving contexts. In Key Stage 5, students move beyond technical identification and themes, language and structure to consider texts from a semiotic and new historicist approach. Students are required to consider how texts were received both in the eras in which they were produced and debate how the meaning and impact of literature has changed over time. 'AS' Level English Literature students are expected to demonstrate a clear knowledge of social structures and criticise the text in relation to other literature produced in the era. To facilitate our students to develop this skill, we provide our KS5 students with wider reading lists to enable them to engage in debates, which show a wide reading capability both orally, and in the written mode. Students across the year will engage in critical debates and develop their written responses with personal theses driven by theory. To enable this, students will develop their research and criticism skills by applying a variety of literary theories (including psychoanalysis, race and gender debates, Marxism and post colonialism) to their analysis. The English department supports our students with these further education skills by guiding students in their research through: library sessions and training on how to use academic databases.