

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 A Level English Literature, the central themes of love, social value and identity 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.

Substantive Knowledge

At the start of Year 12, students focus on Paper 1: Love through the Ages; 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 their Paper 1 anchor texts: ‘Othello’ and the ‘Pre-1900 Love Poetry Anthology’. 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 ‘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 their study of 'The Great Gatsby' by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Students will consider how themes such as gender, dreams and memory affect the perception and reality of love in the novel. Students thematically form links between the novels' explorations of love and conflict and the loss of innocence and female autonomy with 'Othello' and the 'Pre-19th Poetry Anthology'. Students will consider the modernist era of The Great Gatsby demonstrates a progression or regression in the presentation of society's values and morals. Students finish their first year of A-Level by beginning Paper 2: Texts in Shared Contexts by studying the Core Drama Set Text 'A Streetcar Named Desire' by Tennessee Williams exploring the ways in which ideas and values are presented before critiquing in this post-war text whether society has progressed.

At the start of Year 13, students continue their focus on Paper 2: Texts in Shared Contexts by continuing to study 'A Streetcar Named Desire' analysing the ways in which Williams presents themes such as masculinity and femininity, sexual independence and female subordination. Students simultaneously begin their study of Carol Ann Duffy's 'Feminine Gospels', their post-2000 Core Poetry Set Text. Students will compare how femininity and women are presented within the anthology and critique how the contemporary collection compares to the other literary texts and contexts they have studied over the course of the A-Level. Following this, students also study a comparative literary text 'The Color Purple' by Alice Walker. Students will use this text to explore the strongest female protagonist they have encountered over their studies; students will use this text as a reference point to demonstrate the ways in which authors rebel and present subordination/female power in the texts they have studied. Students then focus on completing their Non Exam Assessment: Texts across Time. Students are required to select two comparative texts and produce a 2,500 word critical study around a central theme of their choice. Students finish Year 13 by analysing the unseen elements of Paper 1 and Paper 2 of their A-Level. Students will study a range of prose and poetry from across the centuries to compare the texts they have studied for each respective paper.

KS5 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. A-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.

In Key Stage 5, students are required to centre their learning and written responses around five central assessment objectives. For AO1, students are required to produce articulate, informed, personal and creative responses which use appropriate concepts and terminology. Students are required to engage with a variety of literary theories and to form lines of debate; furthermore, students are expected to apply literary terminology to their work and consider how meanings are shaped. For AO2, students are required to consider meanings in more detail: they will be required to engage with the conventions of the genre of the text they are approaching: prose, poetry and drama. For AO3, Students are required to position their text contextually through, as previously mentioned, through a New Historicist approach; they must consider how ideas and values are presented over time and question whether society has progressed. For AO4, students will need to make connections to, and beyond, the texts they have studied by comparing and contrasting subject matter, genre, attitude and method in a various literature across the ages. Finally, for AO5 students will need to explore literary texts through a variety of interpretations demonstrating that they can fully engage with the debates surrounding texts.