

Our Curriculum: English

Our Intent

At Headlands School, our English curriculum is built on the belief that language is power: it shapes thought, identity, and our understanding of the world. Through reading, writing, and talk, we aim to develop articulate, confident, and culturally literate individuals who can think critically, communicate precisely, and appreciate the richness of human experience.

Our **English curriculum** is designed to ensure that:

- Students develop a deep and lasting appreciation for literature as both art and argument.
- Every child becomes a confident reader, capable writer, and thoughtful speaker who can express ideas with accuracy and imagination.
- Knowledge of story, argument, pattern, context, grammar, and oracy builds cumulatively from KS3 to KS5, forming a coherent 7-year journey of mastery.
- Vocabulary and grammar are taught explicitly, empowering students to write and speak with precision.
- Texts from diverse times, voices, and cultures broaden students' moral, social, and intellectual horizons.
- Students understand how literature reflects, shapes, and challenges the world around them.
- All learners, including disadvantaged and SEND pupils, are supported and challenged to achieve ambitious outcomes.

Ultimately, our curriculum aims to nurture not just exam success, but empathy, creativity, and the confidence to use language as a force for good.

Our Implementation

To realise this intent, our English curriculum is delivered through a structured, ambitious, and coherent 7-Year Plan. It is underpinned by our Concept Map, which defines progression in **metaphor, story, argument, pattern, context, grammar, and oracy**.

1. Curriculum Design and Progression

- The KS3 curriculum builds firm foundations in reading, writing, and oracy through big-idea questions such as “*Are the powerful always in control?*” and “*Can bravery exist without fear?*”
- Each unit develops conceptual understanding while spiralling key disciplinary skills: interpretation, analysis, comparison, and creation.
- KS4 and KS5 build on these foundations through the study of canonical and contemporary texts (e.g., *Macbeth*, *A Christmas Carol*, *An Inspector Calls*, *The Lovely Bones*), preparing students for GCSE and A-Level success.
- Mastery statements ensure consistent progression across year groups, with each concept revisited in increasing depth and complexity.

2. Knowledge-Rich and Text-Rich Curriculum

- Every unit is anchored in a high-quality text that develops cultural, moral, and intellectual understanding.
- Reading is embedded through Forensic Reading, Rapid Reads, and Lexicons to support disciplinary literacy across all subjects.
- Students encounter a broad literary heritage alongside diverse global voices to encourage inclusivity, empathy, and curiosity.

3. Explicit Vocabulary, Grammar, and Writing Instruction

- Vocabulary is systematically taught and revisited through the Lexicon model, drawing on etymology, morphology, and context.
- Grammar is taught as a tool for expression, with students learning to manipulate syntax, punctuation, and structure for rhetorical and creative effect.

- Writing follows a clear modelled sequence (I Do, We Do, You Do), ensuring all students learn to plan, craft, edit, and refine with precision.
- Both analytical and creative writing are explicitly linked to reading and talk.

4. Oracy and Structured Talk

- Oracy is central to English and woven through every unit.
- Students develop confidence through discussion, debate, performance, and presentation, supported by the Voice 21 framework.
- Structured talk routines (e.g., *Yes, But* debates, *Because-But-So* tasks, formal speeches) develop reasoning, empathy, and persuasive skill.
- Spoken Language at GCSE provides a formal culmination of these skills.

5. Assessment and Feedback

- Assessments are cumulative and synoptic, allowing students to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skill.
- Each Data Collection point measures both attainment and progress against curriculum foci.
- Iterative Assessments and HITs (High-Impact Teacher Assessment) provide regular opportunities for retrieval, feedback, and redrafting.
- Formative feedback targets Concept Map strands, enabling precise improvement.

6. Inclusion and Support

- Students with reading, writing, or communication difficulties are supported through Individual Reading Plans (IRPs), Fresh Start, Bedrock, and targeted intervention.
- Adaptations ensure all students access ambitious texts and participate fully in discussion and writing.
- Stretch opportunities challenge high-prior-attaining students through comparative, theoretical, and evaluative tasks.

7. Cultural and Personal Development

- Literature is used as a mirror and a window - helping students understand themselves and others.
- Cross-curricular links to PSHE, Forensic Reading, and British Values strengthen moral and civic literacy.
- Whole-school events such as National Poetry Day, World Book Day, and a variety of writing competitions and activities reinforce pride in English as a discipline of thought and expression.
- Careers education is woven throughout the curriculum: students explore how the study of English develops transferable skills for journalism, law, education, media, publishing, creative industries, and leadership—preparing them for a broad range of future pathways.

The Impact

The impact of our English curriculum is seen in:

- **Academic Success:** Strong outcomes at GCSE and A-Level, with improved attainment in reading, writing, and oracy across all key stages.
- **Articulate, Critical Thinkers:** Students can analyse, compare, and evaluate how writers shape meaning, and express their own interpretations fluently.
- **Creative, Confident Writers:** Students write with imagination, control, and precision, demonstrating mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and structure.
- **Informed, Empathetic Citizens:** Exposure to diverse voices builds cultural capital, social awareness, and empathy.
- **Closing Gaps:** Disadvantaged and SEND learners make sustained progress through targeted teaching and intervention.
- **Fluent Communicators:** Students speak with confidence, listen actively, and engage thoughtfully in discussion and debate.
- **Sustained Love of English:** Student voice, engagement in reading events, and participation in enrichment activities demonstrate that English is a subject of pride, identity, and joy.

Impact is monitored through formal assessment, quality assurance, student voice, and outcomes data to ensure our curriculum continues to evolve, inspire, and empower.

