

BARTON COURT GRAMMAR SCHOOL – ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Facilities

The English, Film and Drama department is comprised of seven teaching rooms and a specially designed Drama Rehearsal space or “mini theatre”. In addition to these, there is the potential to make use of the school’s four ICT suites, including the Library.

Key Stage 3

KS3 (Y7 & 8) English is delivered through seven lessons per fortnight, and homework is set in 4 of those lessons. In the first two years we prepare students for the close reading, creative writing and analytical tasks assessed on the new English specification. Learning is supported by a wide range of activities, ICT and printed resources, ensuring that a variety of activities is offered to suit every type of learner.

The focus is on the three key skill areas of Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening. Students will learn key skills of language analysis, including arguing and persuading, describing, and writing to entertain. All students will study poetry and a complete Shakespeare text during Key Stage 3. Literary genres will also be covered including: Victorian ghost stories; detective fiction and science – fiction.

There are assessments at the end of the six terms and key skills are assessed in areas such as Speaking and Listening, writing creative fiction, Non – fiction analysis, Media awareness, Reading and Comprehension skills and group work. By the end of KS3 we expect our students to express their ideas clearly, confidently and effectively. We also encourage wider reading and involvement in extra-curricular activities such as creative writing, debate and public speaking

Students will also study the language of the media, in terms of an analysis of the presentation of news and advertising. Students will also participate in rigorous study of punctuation, spelling and grammar with key assessments on a regular basis. In addition, they will study word derivation and Etymology with a focus on Greek and Latin roots.

Key Stage 4

The Department teaches English Language and English Literature at GCSE via the AQA Examination board. Year 9 undertake a foundation year in which they focus on gothic fiction, a Shakespeare play, poetry and an introductory approach to the skills of the new English Language specification.

The AQA examinations are all closed book so students are expected to know the texts well and to demonstrate a thorough understanding of those texts which an emphasis on authorial methods. There is great emphasis in KS3 on teaching students how to create effective revision notes, how to study and revise for examinations and how to respond to examination prompts perceptively and using a range of judiciously chosen textual evidence.

There are four examinations at the end of KS4:

English Language Paper 1 – Creative Reading and Writing

English Language Paper 2 – Writers’ Viewpoints and Perspectives

English Literature Paper 1 – Macbeth (William Shakespeare) and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Robert Louis Stevenson)

English Literature Paper 2 – An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley) and a selection of poetry (Conflict and Power)

Key Stage 5

English is a very popular A-Level at Barton Court and currently we have four classes in the current Year 12 cohort. A-Level English is now a two year linear course culminating in two examination papers at the end of Year 13.

A Level

Texts and Genres. Students will explore tragedy as a genre. We are currently studying Othello and Richard 3rd, both by William Shakespeare. Students will study the form of tragedy and consider how the form has been shaped and altered over time. We will take a look at extracts of tragedy from the Ancient Greeks to the post-modern period in order to deepen understanding.

Crime Fiction – students will also study crime fiction as a mode of writing and will study the following texts in detail:

When Will There Be Good News – Kate Atkinson

Brighton Rock – Graham Greene

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner – Coleridge

Unit 4: The study of literary theory. Students will study Post-colonialism, Feminism, Marxism and narrative theory. They will be expected to write two extended essays in which they will demonstrate a critical understanding of theory through application of the 'reading' to a range of modern texts.

General notes

The department runs two separate film clubs for older and younger students, together with regular booster sessions to support key stages at various times during the year. We try to bring in visiting writers and theatre groups to perform to our students. We also arrange theatre visits as opportunities arise. The department supports various competitions and initiatives during the year such as creative writing and spelling. We also run a debate and public speaking club and a creative writing group.

The Department is looking to enhance the extra-curricular activities that it offers and it would expect that a new member of staff would be similarly willing to take charge of an activity. Future options include film making, Music Journalism, setting up a school radio, and assisting with the school magazine, "Clarion!"