



Welcome to English at Lady Margaret School

Head of Department: Mrs Rachel Alexander

2nd in Department: Miss Kate Poulton

English Teachers: Miss Lucy Murray (KS3 curriculum coordinator), Ms Nicola Lupton (Deputy Head), Mrs Laura Graham, Mrs Octavia Ward, Miss Ruth Irwin, Miss Emily Murray (English and Drama) and Ms Joanna Bacon (English and Drama)

Frequently Asked Questions

How are English groups arranged?

English throughout the school is taught in mixed ability groups. This has been proven to raise attainment for pupils of all ability levels. In Year 7 and 8, girls are taught English in their form groups. In Year 9, pupils have been reorganised into mixed ability English groups of about 24 students. At GCSE we teach in mixed ability groups but provide language lessons to targeted groups of different abilities.

What do you do in Year 7?

In keeping with our policy for all year groups from this year, all pupils follow the same programme at the same time. They all make a lively, varied start to their English programme with a range of writing and speaking tasks based on short stories. The set classic novel is *Little Women*. There will be a non-fiction unit on London, and we will study a range of poems themed around 'Characters and Animals'. Year 7 will also go on to study Shakespeare's Twelfth Night later on in the year with a focus on dramatic performance and creative writing. All units involve a range of writing and there are plenty of opportunities for creative writing and poetry. In common with all year groups, Year 7 has specific common assessment tasks every half term.

What are your key strengths?

English is a popular subject, taught only by specialists and valued by the girls, so there is a good momentum of work and confidence; this bears fruit in the good examination results that you will find overleaf. Our teachers are an incredibly strong team and we plan lessons that are engaging, purposeful and promote progress for all pupils. In preparation for the new GCSE, we are putting increased emphasis on teaching classic texts; for instance all girls study Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in Year 8 and Bronte's *Jane Eyre* in Year 9. We hope that our displays reflect the range of approaches taken, even though they reflect only work completed in the last few weeks. We believe strongly in the value of Extra-Curricular Activities and Cross-Curricular work.

Do you teach Drama?

Drama is taught as a separate subject at KS3 level for Years 8 and 9. The Drama Department and English Department work closely together and collaborate on approaches to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The first GCSE cohort for Drama are completing their exams in May 2020. Please refer to Drama's curriculum page on the school website for more information.

What Extra-Curricular Activities and Cross-Curricular work do you do?

In the House Competitions, we run the Year 7 Spelling Bee and the Poetry Slam, and the Year 8 Reading Aloud Competition. We have entered the Poetry Aloud competition which we offer to all years. A Creative Writing Club

and a Drama group are run by the Department. Reading groups are run for both KS3 and KS4. We train girls to read aloud clearly and fluently, and to develop presentation skills in assemblies, services and for other audiences. There is a Literary Society for Years 11 – 13 and a school newspaper, Her Lady’s Voice. We run theatre trips especially to the Unicorn Theatre. Our Debating Society is driven by the English Department and we run competitions for KS3 and older students. The Drama Department will also put on a school production later in the year.

How do you encourage independent reading?

We have reading lists that are targeted at each Year group individually (you can see some of these on display). We track pupils’ reading and offer a range of rewards to encourage reading including book vouchers and reward trips. We have a fortnightly reading lesson which allows pupils time to read their own books and discuss reading ideas. We run a KS3 book club based upon the Centenary reading list where pupils are being challenged to read a book from every decade of the School’s history. The school library is well stocked and teachers are able to help encourage independent reading and guide pupils with reading choices.

How do you assess pupils at KS3?

Pupils sit assessments for each unit of work they complete in English – this roughly works out as once every half-term but some units are longer or shorter depending on the text. These are marked by teachers with targeted feedback on how to improve and students complete practice assessments with detailed guidance and feedback in class prior to the end of unit assessment.

Once a term, we will mark tests by comparative judgement. This means that as a Department we collaboratively rank pupils’ work to track pupil progress against their peers. We retain this data for our own purposes: parents and pupils are not informed of the outcomes. We teach a general feedback lesson to pupils looking at good examples of the work in question with a focus always on improving or the next piece of work. This is a reliable way to make sure that all pupils are making good progress. We do not use Levels.

How do you work on Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar?

The English Department believes in the importance of literacy and it is explicitly taught in Year 7 and 8. Teachers set regular spelling and punctuation tests and literacy teaching is tied to our schemes of work. Written work is marked for literacy using the school marking codes. Literacy mats are used in Years 7-9 in order to encourage pupils

What is your Homework policy in Year 7?

Year 7 are set regular homework in Year 7. There is no homework timetable but we aim to set one small task (e.g. reading, learning spellings, correcting and editing work) and one more extended task (e.g. extended writing or research) each week. In total, pupils will do about an hour of English homework every week.

Headline Examination Results in English 2019

	GCSE		A Level
9-7	Language 49% Literature 59%	% A*-A	43%
9-5	Language 91% Literature 95%	% A*-B	75%
%9-4	Language 94 % Literature 98 %	% A*-C	96%
9-1	100%	% A*-E	100%