



English Learning Area

Focusing on developing students' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening is at the heart of what we do in the English Learning Area at Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy. These key skills lay the foundations for success not only in this subject, but in all of the subjects that your son or daughter will study during their time at school.

The English Learning Area is based on the ground floor corridor of the Huguenot building, a spacious suite of rooms close to our well-resourced library. The department comprises of 14 teachers who are English specialists and two SEN specialists from the Curriculum Support Department who teach our nurture groups in Years 7 and 8.

We have recently completely rewritten our Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure that it provides the best possible preparation for students before they start their GCSEs. In Year 7, students study story-telling, myths and legends, focusing on translations of *The Odyssey* and *Beowulf*. They also encounter a wide range of other texts over the course of Year 7 from poetry to non-fiction. The Shakespeare text studied in Year 7 is *Julius Caesar*.

Part of the motivation for redesigning the curriculum at Key Stage 3 was to ensure that our students are exposed to a diverse range of voices from different cultures and backgrounds. As well as covering works that are widely recognised to be the best examples of literature ever written in English such as Dickens' *Great Expectations* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, we also teach a range of works by writers of colour such as Andrea Levy, Chinua Achebe, Kazuo Ishiguro and Imtiaz Dharker. All members of the department have engaged in racial literacy training and we actively work to challenge white privilege and unconscious bias towards minority groups.

Students begin work towards their GCSEs at the start of Year 10. We teach the AQA syllabuses for both English Literature and English Language. In English Literature, students study Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the 19th century science fiction/Gothic novel *Jekyll and Hyde*, an anthology of poetry on the theme of Power and Conflict, spanning the late 18th to 21st centuries, and a 20th century play, *An Inspector Calls*. In English Language, we focus on the key skills of analysis and inference by reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts written between 1800 and the present day. Students also work to develop their writing skills in both creative writing and a variety of non-fiction genres, including formal letters, articles and speeches.

Although we do not have a sixth form at MVPA, our students are warmly encouraged to take up English Literature at A level whether moving on to the sixth form at our sister school MCA or to another sixth form in the area. One way that we do this is through the provision of A level taster sessions at the start of Year 11.

Students in English are set by ability from the start of Year 7. There are 7 sets in each year group, including a small nurture group to provide additional support for the students who need it the most. Whichever set your daughter or son is in, the teaching and materials that they receive will be tailored for their ability level to ensure that all of our students receive the right level of challenge and support for their needs. Students receive regular feedback on their progress and are assessed through a variety of methods including end of unit assessments and regular spelling and Knowledge Organiser tests. We also use peer assessment and self-assessment to help students reflect on how to develop and improve their work. Homework is set regularly with a focus on encouraging independent learning and extended writing. By the time that they are in Year 11, we expect students to be revising independently in addition to completing their weekly homework. Intervention and catch up sessions at lunch time, after school and even on Saturday mornings are provided to help every student to achieve their potential.



All of the students at MVPA are encouraged to make use of our well-stocked library and we also have exciting extra-curricular opportunities available for them. In Year 7, students have the opportunity to join a creative writing club and as they progress through the school they will also have access to extra-curricular book groups, script-reading classes, theatre trips and a lunchtime poetry society. Year 8 students have a weekly Drop Everything And Read session which encourages reading for pleasure. A strong emphasis is placed on fostering good literacy across the school with a special focus on oracy – activities include weekly debates, celebrations for National Poetry Day and

World Book Day, regular English department assemblies, a whole school competition to compose an original poem, a whole school Poetry by Heart competition and an ongoing emphasis on appreciating the joys of language through our 'Word of the Week' initiative.