



English at The Bridge

Aims and objectives

The English curriculum at The Bridge is underpinned by the school's ethos, 'Hope and a Future', and belief in the values of courageous optimism, boundless creativity and heartfelt compassion.

Since students who join The Bridge often arrive at different points of the year, from different secondary schools, with varying levels of knowledge and understanding of English - typically, because of a learning history significantly compromised by long term school absences - the aim is to provide a strong and nurturing English language/literature core curriculum, that is personalised, flexible, continuously evolving, but coherent, and sensitive to students' academic starting points, interests, talents and social, emotional needs.

Even though the vast majority of English GCSE students take the English Language GCSE in Year 11, the curriculum's sharp focus on literature as well as English language, allows for the more experienced students of English to go on to use their transferable skills, developed across the two subjects, to also study for the GCSE literature qualification in Year 11, if this is desired and appropriate.

Not all of our Key Stage 4 students wish to study just for GCSE English or literature; some prefer the choice of also studying English using real-world situations. For them, we offer an alternative Functional Skills English Level 1 and/or Level 2 qualification. The guided learning hours for the Functional English course is 55 hours. The qualification enables learners to develop confidence in English skills, preparing them for progression into employment or further education and for use in their daily lives.

Essentially, we want our students in **Key Stage 3**, to have the necessary English skills and enthusiasm to successfully reintegrate into their mainstream schools, and for those in **Key Stage 4**, to become confident and effective communicators, independent, and well prepared to rise to the challenges of the post-16 world.

Reading: All our students are encouraged to become fluent, independent and critical readers of all kinds of texts; they question and reflect on the written word; they evaluate and discuss what they have read, and enjoy **reading for pleasure** and recording their evaluations on their reading logs. Students use texts to explore language and meaning, to acquire information, to gain further insight into their own and another city or country's culture, and to extend their personal and social awareness. They have access to a variety of texts (poetry, drama, prose, fiction, non-fiction and media) in the English classroom library.

Writing: Students are encouraged to become confident, articulate writers who use words precisely, and understand that writing is a means of learning, of shaping experience, exploring ideas and language, and expressing feelings. Technical accuracy is carefully planned for, as are the opportunities for students to write for a variety of purposes and audiences and appreciate the benefits of drafting, redrafting and proofreading. They make use of speech writing, note-making, word processing and desk top publishing as they work towards finished products in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes. Just as with reading, students are encouraged to simply **write for pleasure**, using their own interests and ideas, or from titles and photographs, designed to jump-start their imagination.

Spoken Language: Students are encouraged to recognize the power of talk as a means of exploring language and ideas, persuading, arguing, and gaining confidence. They have opportunities in the classroom to talk in small groups, class discussions and role-plays. An important part of oral work is that students should learn to be good listeners, able to appreciate the views of others, as well as articulating their own.

Teaching and learning styles

Emphasis is placed on approaches in which students are as active as possible in their learning. Students work individually, in pairs, or as a whole class. Sometimes students select their own groups, but sometimes, according to the aims of the activity, groupings will be constructed to create productive dynamics within groups, or to ensure a mixture of ability, to allow for differentiation, or gender. Talk is recognized as being of central importance in the classroom: rooms are arranged to encourage collaborative work and peer support. Students at The Bridge have enjoyed many a debate on contemporary issues including, **The 2019 Election, The European Super League, and The Covid Vaccine Mandate**. Students are also used to working with minimal talk, when necessary.

As well as celebrating student achievement through assessment, students' creative outputs are celebrated through wall displays, booklets of shared prose and poetry, end of term reward certificates, and biannual reports to parent/carers.

Students are encouraged to celebrate special literary/mental health events such as **National Poetry Day, World Book Day** and **World Mental Health Day** (see the whole school project, The Bridge Poetry Pharmacy in the curriculum), and to enter film review writing competitions. The department organises visits to the theatre, as well as theatre and Speak out Challenge workshops. These visits give students the opportunity to see productions and consolidate learning relevant to their work in English. They are also used to encourage students to develop an interest in theatre-going and the spoken word for its own sake, and to interact with other students and staff in a way not possible in school.

Students enjoy, and are encouraged to make links between different subject areas whenever common themes and interests should evolve: the analysis of Monet's 'Water-Lily Pond Bridge' as a stimulus for students' own poetry (art); the genetic screening Argument Writing topic (Biology); touch-typing & desk top publishing (ICT), and the whole school 2019 Election Debate/current affairs and Thought for the Week (PSHCE -citizenship).

English planning

KS3 (Order of delivery of teaching units is subject to change)

Term 1:

‘Cultural Conversations – Poems That Inspire’ by EMC. This unit of work, in preparation of **National Poetry Day** - usually early October, is a wonderful opportunity for The Bridge students to explore how texts are read differently, by different people, and how that can change in different times and places. This unit of work includes poems by Maya Angelou, Seamus Heaney, William Wordsworth; lyrics by Bob Dylan, Stormzy and John Lennon, as well as work on Amanda Gorman’s poem, ‘The Hill We Climb’.

Narrative and descriptive writing; Non-fiction - analysis of Martin Luther King’s, **‘I have a dream’** speech linked to students’ own dream speeches; language focused questions on extracts from **‘Transmission’** by Hari Kunzru and **‘The Bottle Factory Outing’**, Beryl Bainbridge; 19th Century novel depending on year group and what has been covered by the student’s referring school: a fast, immersive read of either **‘Of Mice & Men’** John Steinbeck, **‘A Christmas Carol’** Charles Dickens, **‘Jekyll & Hyde’** Robert Louis Stevenson, or Sherlock Holmes short stories including, **‘A Speckled Band’** and **‘A Scandal in Bohemia’** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, followed by work to ensure that students develop essential inference and deduction skills, some consideration of the contextual perspectives using non-fiction texts; and comparative thinking work.

The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Themes 1 & 2: ‘Anxiety’ & ‘Living with Difference’ or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested ‘conditions’/unanimous agreement - students use their own experiences of challenging mental health issues and situations, their creativity, wisdom and poetry skills to craft and ‘prescribe’ some comforting and healing poems for each other and anyone else who wants to read them.

Term 2: Language unit, including: **Speech writing** – following an analytical response to Churchill’s famous speech, **‘We shall fight on the beaches’**, students adapt the conventions of the persuasive text for their chosen audience and purpose; Shakespeare text, depending on year group and coverage whilst at the referring school - a fast, immersive read of **‘Macbeth’**, **‘The Tempest’** or **‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’**, followed by inference and deduction skills work, and context; students compare live performance or film version with text; **Other Cultures Poetry** unit with some emphasis on **Unseen poems** and comparative thinking work. Students also write their own poetry and critique each other’s poems. **The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Theme 2: ‘Loneliness’ or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested ‘conditions’/unanimous agreement.**

Term 3: Language unit; mop up aspects of the curriculum missed and for those in **Year 9, exam prep** work; Modern text, depending on year group and areas covered whilst at the referring school, a fast, immersive read of: **‘An Inspector Calls’** JB Priestley; **‘Our Day Out’** Willy Russell, or **‘The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty’** David Calcutt, followed by work to ensure inference and deduction skills are developed, the opportunity for students to appreciate the relationships between texts and the context in which they were written, and comparative thinking work; **Power & Conflict Poetry** unit with some emphasis on comparing **Unseen poems**. **The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit**

Theme 3: 'Lack of Courage' or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested 'conditions'/unanimous agreement.

KS4 (Order of delivery of teaching units is subject to change)

AQA: 8700 (Language) and 8702 (Literature) 9-1 GCSE linear 2 year courses

Year 10

Term 1: 'Cultural Conversations – Poems That Inspire' by EMC. This unit of work, in preparation of **National Poetry Day** - usually early October, is a wonderful opportunity for The Bridge students to explore how texts are read differently, by different people, and how that can change in different times and places. This unit of work includes poems by Maya Angelou, Seamus Heaney, William Wordsworth; lyrics by Bob Dylan, Stormzy and John Lennon, as well as work on Amanda Gorman's poem, 'The Hill We Climb'.

Language unit, including non-fiction texts, '**In Event of Moon Disaster 1969**' President Nixon Speech and '**Challenger Disaster: Address to the American Nation 1986**' Ronald Reagan - link to Spoken Language unit; literary non-fiction: '**My Left Foot**' Christy Brown; '**A Christmas Carol**' (c19th novella - Exam Text) Charles Dickens, followed by context and comparative thinking work.

The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Themes 1 & 2: 'Anxiety' & 'Living with Difference' or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested 'conditions'/unanimous agreement - students use their own experiences of challenging mental health issues and situations, their creativity, wisdom and poetry skills to craft and 'prescribe' some comforting and healing poems for each other and anyone else who wants to read them.

Term 2: Language unit, including '**My Polish Teacher's Tie**' Helen Dunmore - cultural heritage short story; **Other Cultures Poetry** with students followed by students writing their own poetry and critiquing each other's; **Power and Conflict Poetry** (Exam Text), including contextual perspectives)/**Unseen poems** and comparative thinking work -**more exam focused. The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Theme 2: 'Loneliness' or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested 'conditions'/unanimous agreement.**

Term 3: Mop up aspects of the curriculum missed; Language unit; '**Macbeth**' (Shakespeare Exam Text), '**An Inspector Calls**' (Modern Texts: Exam Text) JB Priestley, followed by context and comparative thinking work; exam prep focus. **The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Theme 3: 'Lack of Courage' or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested 'conditions'/unanimous agreement.**

Year 11

Term 1: Poetry focused on National Poetry Day - usually early October. Unit includes multi-cultural poetry. Language unit, including exam practice; '**A Christmas Carol**' (c19th novella - Exam Text) Charles Dickens - comparative thinking work using short extracts from '**Hard Times**', '**Great Expectations**' and '**Oliver Twist**', focussing on themes, writing style and tension. Explore context of novella. Non-fiction reading and writing work based on **Lisa O'Kelly's article on 'A Christmas Carol'** in The Guardian newspaper.

The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Themes 1 & 2: ‘Anxiety’ & ‘Living with Difference’ or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested ‘conditions’/unanimous agreement - *students use their own experiences of challenging mental health issues and situations, their creativity, wisdom and poetry skills to craft and ‘prescribe’ some comforting and healing poems for each other and anyone else who wants to read them.*

Term 2: Language unit, including language analysis and comparative response to literary non-fiction texts, ‘The **Ascent of Long’s Peak**’ Isabella Bird and ‘**Into Thin Air (1997) About climbing Mount Everest, Power and Conflict Poetry**’ (Exam Text); Revision/timed practice papers.

The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Theme 2: ‘Loneliness’ or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested ‘conditions’/unanimous agreement.

Term 3: Mop up aspects of the curriculum missed; Language unit; Revision/timed practice papers; GCSE exams. **The Bridge Whole School Poetry Pharmacy Unit Theme 3: ‘Lack of Courage’** or students vote on their preferences from a list of suggested ‘conditions’/unanimous agreement.

Curriculum planning also considers the school’s Unique Me principles for each half term.

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AQA Website for further details:

English Language: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8700-SP->

English Literature: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8702-SP->

Functional English <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8720-8725-SP->

Teaching English to students with special needs

In English, specific teaching approaches including grouping, resource, and work differentiated by outcome and task, are used to cater for the diverse academic, social and emotional needs of our students; all are provided with learning opportunities to achieve at their own level, including those who may be very able, have English as an additional language, or who have specific learning difficulties. When planning and delivering English and providing feedback to students, any EHCP (Educational, Health and Care Plan), IEP (Individual Educational Plan) and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) are taken into account.

Assessment and recording

Assessment processes in English are a means to promote effective learning by the celebration of achievement, by diagnosis of areas for improvement, and by formative dialogue – written and verbal. It is also a means of informing teacher planning and ensuring that each student has a bespoke curriculum, based on what they have been able to cover and develop in terms of knowledge and skills whilst on their English learning journey at The Bridge. Effective, formative assessment is the responsibility of both teacher and students, and self/peer assessment is an integral part of the record-keeping processes. Continual reviewing of progress is an essential prerequisite for further development, and students use their English orange target sheets to reflect on their success in meeting targets, plan for future development or embedding of skills, and set themselves fresh

challenges. Summative assessments tend to take place at the end of at least one unit of work each half term period, and after end of year exams. These key ends of unit grades are also recorded.

Resources

The maintenance of high quality and evolving resources is vital to the effective delivery of English. Learning resources are continually replenished and developed, and new resources added. There is a small library in the English teaching room, from which students may sign out texts, using the signing out book. English maintains a stock of fiction, non-fiction, media and drama texts in small sets which reflect our student class sizes. There are also sets of poetry texts, and boxes of assorted poetry anthologies. Students are encouraged to write book reviews and recommend books they have enjoyed; their recommendations often make up the new stock of books ordered in for the English library. Students also add to the library stock through their own poems and short stories that are compiled into booklets, and appreciated by all.

Monitoring and review

Maria Jackson (Deputy Head i/c Teaching and Learning) is responsible for monitoring the standard of student work and the quality of teaching. Janick Yeung is responsible for developing and delivering the English curriculum at The Bridge. Monitoring of the English curriculum and areas for development are identified as part of the Personal Development/Quality of Education Health Checks three times a year and discussed with the Head of School and the lead governor responsible. Feedback is then given to the Local Governing Body.