St James’s Church of England high School

**English Department**

The English department works to ensure all students make outstanding progress whilst also developing their love and passion for both English language and literature. There are eight full time teachers and two part time teachers in the team including the assistant SENDco. The department is led by a HOD and a 2i/c. In addition the department is supported by a full time librarian, TAs and an English mentor/tutor.

The department is high achieving and once again got superb results in this summer’s examinations with 86% of students achieving grades 9-4 in English Language and 85% in Literature. Our results were amongst the best GCSE English results in the Bolton Authority with 91% achieving a GCSE qualification with grades 9-4. We are also proud that 29% of students achieved the highest grades (7-9) with a number of students receiving grade 9s in English.

Teachers are well supported and invested in. St James’s is a teaching school and teacher development and teaching and learning innovation is central to our work. All staff at St James’s are given the opportunity to grow and develop their career. All teachers have regular opportunities to contribute to department development and school development work and are fully supported in doing this. The St James’s English department is a great place to grow your career as both a teacher and as a school leader.

The department has its own suite of rooms including the school library, drama studio and an ICT room with workstations. All classrooms have an interactive whiteboard. In addition, there is a class set of laptops and kindles which are available as a bookable resource. Most staff enjoy the benefit of their own teaching room.

It is a well-resourced department comprising audio visual equipment, interactive digital media, and a wide range of language and literature texts along with a stock of commercially and school produced materials. Staff also make full use of whole school resources such as, learn pads, flip cameras and digital recorders. There is a supportive culture within the team and group planning and collaboration is routine. There are full schemes of work in place for all year groups and these are regularly reviewed and adapted by the teachers within the department.

Lesson duration is fifty minutes. Pupils in KS3, years 7- 8, are taught English for four lessons each week. Year 7 have an additional lesson of Literacy Zone which takes place in the library. Both Year 7 and 8 follow the Accelerated Reading Programme. KS3 pupils are grouped in tiers and are taught in parallel sets. Setting is reviewed each half term and is responsive to assessment data and intervention. At the end of year 8, the bands are merged to create 9 ability groups for the start of Key Stage 4.

At Key Stage 4, year 9 have four lessons, year 10 five and year 11 four. Pupils are prepared for the AQA GCSE English Language and English Literature examinations.

The department is supported by a full programme of intervention strategies including reading schemes, one to one and small group booster classes. There is a range of SEND support for identified pupils. We do, however, remind staff that intervention is best implemented in lesson and teachers ensure that they use differentiated outcomes and activities to support students' accessing of the curriculum and their own progress against their flight path.

Central to the work of the English department is enhancing pupils’ experience of language and literature within and outside of the classroom. Pupils have participated in external events including theatre visits, Poetry Live, a Criminal Court Competition and residential trips to Shakespeare’s Globe theatre, and the Harry Potter Studios. We have regular visits to the school by poets, authors and theatre companies. Most recently, Emma-Graham Harrison, International Affairs Correspondent for ‘The Guardian’ spoke to our Y9 to highlight the importance of English and author, Andy Briggs entertained Y8 pupils with the trials and tribulations of becoming an author in print. Members of the department regularly organise entries to competitions and promote national events such as Poetry and World Book days. In 2016 one of our year 7 pupils was the national winner in The Royal Mail Young Letter Writer Competition.

Our wider reading in KS3 was considered as a “strong focus in the development of literacy” by Ofsted inspectors. Weekly events include Film Club and a creative writing group for boys.

The school library is developing as a multi media learning centre and currently provides 11 networked workstations; thirty learn pads, an interactive whiteboard and reprographic facility. Pupils have access to the library at break, lunchtime and after school. There are tables for working and comfortable seating for reading. Book fairs and promotions are regular parts of the work of the department.

In summary, this is an exciting opportunity to join a vibrant, outward looking English department in an outstanding school.