



Dedication Respect Engagement Achievement Motivation Success

## Trafford Alternative Education Provision

### Deep Dive into English Q & A

Subject Curriculum	
<i>Subject Curriculum</i>	<p><b>Does the subject curriculum match or exceed the breadth of the National Curriculum?</b></p> <p>All the key areas/skills of the National Curriculum are taught in full, as evidenced by the Year Overviews and Learning Journey documents. Although the nature of the school and our student cohort means that progress from year to year (and certainly from Year 7 to Year 11) is extremely limited, the department's Programmes of Study (POS) are built around transferable key skills and a range of texts which represent cultural and social breadth.</p>
	<p><b>Is challenge understood in terms of curriculum end points?</b></p> <p>The decision to build a portion of Key Stage 3 around Literature texts affords students the opportunity to experience a wide range of genres and text types and – taking into account the nature of the students we receive – enhance their cultural capital. The Programmes of Study focus on building transferable skills across reading and writing which develop across the Key Stages (if this occurs). KS3 skills therefore feed into Year 10, which combines Literature-based POS with more overtly GCSE Language-focused preparation to ensure students are ready to succeed in the final Year 11 exams.</p> <p>The POS include some challenging texts ('A Christmas Carol,' or a Guardian article on knife crime, for example) which provide challenge on each student's journey to their end point, which can vary widely at this school.</p> <p>The assessments in the POS formalize this connection by using GCSE-influenced tasks and marking, helping to bridge the gap between Key Stages in terms of analysis and writing (both fiction and non-fiction).</p>

*Curriculum components*

**Do pupils have the prior knowledge necessary to learn new curriculum content?**

The nature and structure of TAEP and its transient student cohort creates additional complexities when planning a KS3 curriculum as students can be very short-stay and Years 7-9 are taught together\*. Additionally, a number of students join the school after prolonged absence from education, with some significant gaps in their learning. To address the difficulties of catering effectively for a wide range of abilities and – significantly – ages, the members of the English department decided to combine a focus on Literature texts to embed transferrable skills and design Programs of Study that can be taught in smaller sections (see example below).

The English curriculum over both schools is designed to help students fill gaps in their academic knowledge and increase their cultural capital whilst offering challenge. The challenge is provided by the variety and nature of the literature texts used, which range from drama to non-fiction prose and cover a range of cultural/social/historical backgrounds, even when delivered in a truncated form. For example, rather than study a whole Shakespeare play – which is challenging for most mainstream students, even with the benefit of an uninterrupted school career – the Introduction to Shakespeare POS is delivered through extracts and varied activities.

By structuring some POS around a series of sub-topics also allows class teachers some flexibility to select various parts of the POS to cater for changing groups, the Year composition of groups, changes to timetables, group merging etc.

\*Update: there are currently two KS3 groups at THS

**Does curriculum planning identify small enough component steps so that all pupils can ultimately achieve ambitious end points?**

Medium term plans for each half-term of learning break topics down into individual lessons and steps which build to the acquisition of ambitious learning end points. The POS and medium term plans are designed to reinforce key skills (in reading, writing and speaking and listening) by revisiting them over different topics. These steps become greater and more complex from KS3 into KS4 as the expectations increase. Teachers will adapt to students' lesson-to-lesson needs through differentiation, varying the POS and year structure, lesson content and so on to ensure that gaps in knowledge are addressed.

<p><i>Curriculum sequencing</i></p>	<p><b>Does planning consider the sequencing of content at different scales to create readiness for future learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Within the lesson sequence, each lesson plan specifically reviews the previous learning at the start of the lesson and refresh students' memories. Small steps of knowledge are built on within the lesson.</li> <li>b) At a topic level, POS have been sequentially planned so that pupils are building on previous learning and are prepared for future learning in each topic.</li> <li>c) Over the year or key stage, planning is sequential and the key English skills are revisited in every year group, with bridging between Key Stage 3 and 4.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Do teachers ensure pupils are drawing on enough knowledge to answer subject specific questions or engage meaningfully in subject disciplinary practices?</b></p> <p>Throughout topics, students learn how to use correct subject vocabulary, such as technical poetic terms for example. Subject specific vocabulary is taught in each POS, with students encouraged to use it regularly and accurately. This is reinforced through key word displays in classrooms.</p> <p><b>Do teachers confuse 'learning through doing' (a pedagogy) with the curriculum goal of acquiring disciplinary knowledge?</b></p> <p>Although English is primarily a skills-based subject, teachers ensure that the key vocabulary and knowledge is foregrounded and also taught alongside the skills. Medium term plans include key vocabulary for each lesson, which teachers will reinforce through questioning, starter tasks etc. Assessments and lesson objectives ensure that acquiring specific disciplinary knowledge to complement subject skills is the goal and that learning is focused on achieving it.</p>
<p><i>Memory</i></p>	<p><b>Do teachers identify crucial components, emphasise and repeat these and ensure they are remembered long term?</b></p> <p>Each lesson begins with a recap of previous learning, with key words and concepts displayed in classrooms and on literacy mats to provide consistent visual reminders. Medium term plans highlight key vocabulary for lessons which is reinforced through starter challenges. The Programmes of Study reinforce crucial components by repeating key vocabulary and concepts over different topics and contexts, so that students can access the language of English and become more confident and accurate in its usage.</p>

**When pupils struggle, do teachers check which prior knowledge components are missing/not automatic?**

Baseline assessments are completed when a student joins the centre to highlight prior knowledge and aid teacher planning and assign Teaching Assistant support and resources.

Daily, weekly and half-termly marking and assessment ensure that gaps in learning are identified and addressed. Intervention or additional support can then be arranged.

*Pedagogy*

***Do teaching decisions achieve curricular intent?***

**Do teachers apply generic pedagogies, e.g. differentiation, feedback) without considering curricular intent?**

Curriculum intent provides a framework for teachers when applying pedagogies to help focus feedback and differentiation and make it more effective. Our students are SEND children and thus the expectation is that will often require targeted, tailored additional support in attaining learning objectives and accessing the curriculum.

**Is 'challenge' misunderstood as generic activity types?**

POS incorporate tasks and end-points which have been designed to challenge students intellectually, with content and assessment which provides opportunities for students to meet and exceed expectations. Additional challenge is provided by teachers when deemed appropriate, through splinter tasks designed to stretch students, varied individualised text options etc. Challenge is an opportunity to enhance and develop, not simply add more repetitious content.

**Do activities require confident knowledge of too many 'fragile' components, overloading working memory?**

The POS and lessons are designed to build knowledge cumulatively through chunking, repetition, word mats and so on. Teachers differentiate tasks to avoid information overload and Teaching Assistants offer support to students who require additional time, explanation, shorter tasks etc. As English is a skills-based subject, vocabulary and knowledge are transferable from POS to POS, thus helping students to become comfortable with key information over the longer term.

<i>Assessment</i>	<b><i>Timely feedback on component learning?</i></b>
	<p><b>Is formative assessment fit for purpose, e.g. a timely check that curriculum components have been remembered, rather than, more problematically, a summative test of composites being used to identify components?</b></p> <p>Informal assessment in the form of verbal questioning, puzzles, quizzes and so on is used regularly in lessons to recap and reinforce key information. There will be a clear focus on required knowledge in the lead up to more summative/formal assessment.</p>
	<p><b>Is summative data collection disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff?</b></p> <p>Summative data is collected every half-term and during each POS to capture the progress made by our students, whose attendance can be irregular or limited, or their time at the centre based on a short-term placement. Due to the smaller groups in the school, this is effective and sustainable for staff. Year 11 students complete mock exams in December and February/March, which provides them with proportionate practice and revision opportunities.</p>
	<p><b>Are pupils who fall behind identified within the lesson sequence, or less helpfully, are interventions based on data from a summative assessment?</b></p> <p>As many of our students arrive from mainstream/home educated settings with significant gaps in their learning, staff closely monitor each student's progress lesson by lesson. When students first join, they complete a baseline assessment which identifies their strengths and areas for development, which teachers use to adapt planning and delivery of the POS. Classwork is marked regularly which, in conjunction with TA support and small class sizes, ensures that any students who are experiencing difficulties are identified and supported quickly.</p>

<i>Culture</i>	<b><i>A climate of high expectations where pupils' love of the subject can flourish</i></b>
	<p><b>How do teachers get the best from pupils?</b></p> <p>Fostering a love of an academic subject can be challenging with some of our students who arrive at the centre already disengaged from learning and education. One key way the English department addresses this is through variety, in terms of texts, tasks and approaches. For example, incorporating drama into text study encourages the students to build confidence and engage. Another key way is to tie learning into 'real-life' situations and careers (lessons and key pieces of work have career links) which can engage students more fully. This, together with use of the school's rewards policy, helps to effectively motivate students.</p>

**How do teachers enrich the curriculum subject?**

As with all subjects in the school, English lessons are linked to careers, with opportunities given to students to consider how their English learning could help them in a wide range of jobs.

The department leads the school's World Book Day activities.

The school also works with an Enterprise Advisor from the Careers and Enterprise Company, offering opportunities for educational visits, guest speakers and so on.

**Are there mechanisms for taking action when pupils display low effort, for example in written work and homework?**

Staff are fully aware of the school's behaviour policy and sanctions, which are used to maintain high expectations, with support from SLT if required. High expectations are regularly reinforced in English lessons, with challenging tasks demanding engagement and quality responses. Positive reinforcement is regularly used to counter low effort, such as rewards for students who engage and praise, which includes verbal and achievement postcards given to parents.



<i>Systems</i>	<b><i>Subject processes and staff support</i></b>
	<p><b>What do the strengths or weaknesses already identified indicate about effective functioning to deliver a quality subject curriculum?</b></p> <p>Whole school systems and processes are designed to support the delivery of quality curricular across the subject spectrum. For example, all students complete a LUCID assessment to identify their reading age. This information is used in English to inform task setting, differentiation requirements, Teaching Assistant allocation in lessons and interventions. Form time is timetabled every day and has a reading focus, with class reading books, individual reading and Lexia, an online platform which offers literacy-based activities to help track students' strengths and target areas for development.</p> <p>These whole-school systems support and operate alongside the English department's quality assurance measures (as identified in this document) to aid in the delivery of a quality curriculum for all students.</p>

	<p><b>Probe systems for staff support and subject CPD, curriculum construction and to ensure consistent quality of subject education.</b></p>
	<p>The aforementioned focus on reading has been introduced and delivered to staff through in-person and online training. Support is offered through SLT, heads of department and experienced teachers, and has been effective in promoting a positive, whole-school philosophy. The embedding of a reading culture is ongoing, with all staff taking responsibility for its success.</p> <p>Teaching assistants work regularly with specific teachers and students to aid with consistency of philosophy and delivery, and they are involved in the planning process as often as possible. Teaching assistants have received training in reading and play a key role in encouraging students to participate and progress.</p> <p>Heads of department have ultimate responsibility for curriculum construction, but the current English curriculum has been developed as a team, with staff specialisms and knowledge combining to establish varied and effective Programmes of Study and subject knowledge. Support between English staff is mutual across both school settings (Trafford High School and Trafford Medical Education Service), with the sharing of resources and subject developments/knowledge (training in the delivery of Functional Skills, for example). This has contributed to a both a strong department identity and the effective delivery of learning.</p>
<p><i>Policy</i></p>	<p><b>Impact of whole school-wide policies on subject delivery?</b></p> <p><b>How whole-school timetabling, marking, assessment, CPD policies and priorities etc affect the quality of subject education.</b></p> <p>Whole school timetabling is carried out by SLT and is influenced by subject needs. As a core subject, English is taught at least four times a week and there is flexibility at Key Stage 4 for Literature to be delivered, depending on the student cohort. Student Voice also informs timetabling (the length of certain lessons, double lessons etc) in English and across the subject curriculum.</p> <p>Marking and assessment is carried out in English in accordance with the whole school policies, with more detailed, specifically structured feedback given (What Went Well and Even Better If, for example) on key summative pieces given. Due to small class sizes, policy clarity and structured assessment tasks, marking is not onerous and allows teachers to give specific, effective feedback.</p> <p>CPD is planned according to the needs of the school and the subject so that whole-school priorities (such as promoting reading, for example) is not solely the remit of the English department. Staff can also access training modules suited to their continuing professional development through the National College online platform.</p>