

Stepney Green Sixth Form. GCSE English Language Year 12. Curriculum Statement

Intent

For this class, we ensure our students achieve the recognised Grade 4 or 5 pass at English Language GCSE in the November sitting. This grade enfranchises them in the local, national and global workforce and further education if required. In doing so, this class perfectly models the school's overall vision of advantaging our students who have suffered disadvantaged and enabling their social equity and mobility.

This course operates a skills-based curriculum where students build on their areas for development identified in their first sitting of the English Language exam in Year 11. Students are equipped with the key skills to ensure a good pass in this subject: close reading, language inference, language and structural analysis and creative and non-fiction writing of their own texts. To showcase these skills, students are exposed to a range of literary fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th and 20th century that work to develop their reading skills and cultural capital as well as answer the exam questions.

Schemes of work are coherently planned and sequenced towards accumulating the sufficient skills required for Paper 1 and 2 but also for future learning and employment, even if these do not feature English specifically for example: inferences from language and the ability to write coherent and effective non-fiction texts e.g. letters, speeches and articles. In addition, the course demands essential skills for the job market or further study: independence, organisation, and the ability to showcase confidence and flexibility in argumentation in writing.

Where students are not successful in the first November sitting, teachers work to analyse the exam results and identify and address gaps in learning to ensure students are successful in the second June sitting. In special circumstances, this course also allows those students who required a higher grade than that which they achieved in their GCSE English Language to improve this grade for further study or destinations.

Implementation

The implementation of the curriculum is considered, designed and executed. Students begin by reflecting on their areas for development that mean they were not able to successfully pass their GCSE in their Year 11 sitting. They are then guided through fast paced but differentiated schemes of work which are closely exam focused. Exam assessment objectives are named, discussed and decoded from the first lesson and regularly returned to ensure students take responsibility for their own achievement and to demystify what is required from them. The curriculum allows students to recall and develop the key skills required to successfully pass the English Language GCSE Paper 1 and 2 in the initial November sitting.

All students follow the same schemes of work, but support is differentiated and whole class discussion means that all students benefit from each other's strengths and build on each other's points of view. Sentence starters, scaffolds, live and cold class models allow students to showcase their skills and learn from others. This is especially true post-November where specific gaps in learning are identified and filled.

Further, life skills such as organisation, healthy and respectful verbal debate and critical thinking are emphasised from the first lesson and the "why" to explain why this focus is important is crucial to teaching. Students understand why these virtues are important and how they contribute to their success in the subject and further study or work.

Where students have already passed the course and require a higher grade, teachers work 1:1 with these students to specifically address the gaps in their learning that can ensure they achieve more highly next time.

In 2020-2021, all of the above work has been facilitated this year by generous funding towards Year 12 GCSE English Language retake tuition sessions which allow students free tuition from English Department team members to support their studies.

Impact

The quantifiable impact of the GCSE retake class at Stepney Green is clear. In 2020, 82.6% of students passed in the June sitting of their exam and 8.69% of students exceeded the grades they required (above a 4). In 2021, students are on track to achieve the results in line with this trend.

Further, students are equipped with key skills for life that allow them to reach successful destinations such as college or university and thrive in the global workplace through apprenticeships or formal employment.