

Intent Statement

What?

The English KS4 curriculum at TPA is primarily about increasing engagement, cultural capital and reading skills. We aspire to create confident, life-long learners who are enriched with a curiosity for learning and the resilience to remain open to it. We aim to grow cultural awareness and social values whilst endeavouring to develop Literacy and functional skills in our KS4 students.

At TPA, the English Department defines substantive knowledge as the core content of any texts explored and an awareness of the key skills a reader and writer may use. For us, disciplinary knowledge is the application of this knowledge and skills to written responses and exam practice. We feel that we have designed a curriculum (and assessment) programme that is fully equipped to deliver and assess both types of knowledge necessary to attain success in KS4.

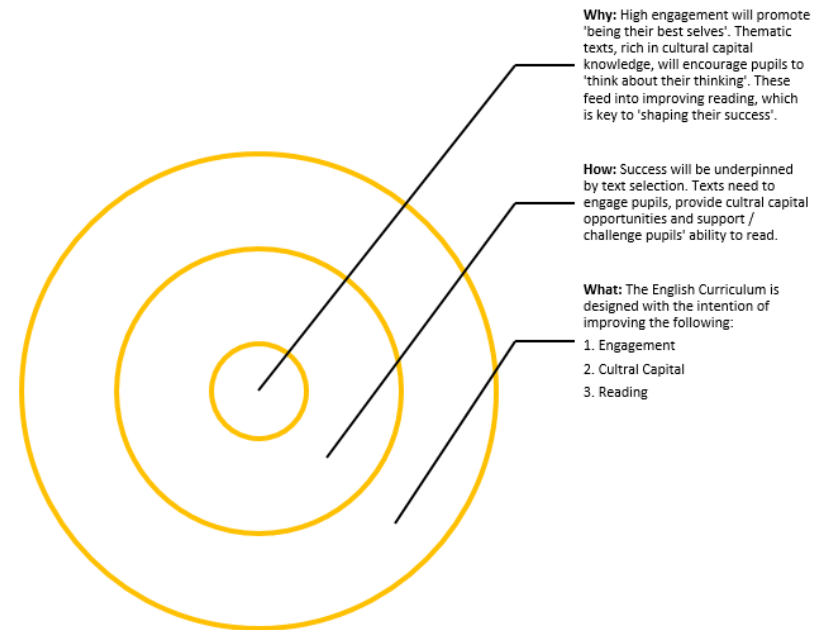
We live in an 'ever- changing' world and, as a department, we are acutely aware of our responsibility to equip students with the necessary skills to break-down and withstand the challenges that life will present them with.

How?

We have responded to the above criteria by adapting our curriculum to meet the Literacy and cultural needs of our pupils. We have chosen to split the two GCSEs to support our pupils with engagement and a deeper understanding of the requirements of both specifications. This has also allowed us more curriculum time to explore wider reading and subsequently enrich our pupils' cultural capital and reading skills.

When studying Literature, our pupils will follow the traditional curriculum model of text (and context) exploration. Regarding Literature Paper 1, students are taught A Christmas Carol, Dickens being a former resident of Portsmouth, thus reinforcing Cultural Capital. The department teaches the Shakespearean play (Macbeth) thus endeavouring to support

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transferrable Literacy skills. For Literature Paper 2, students are taught 'An Inspector Calls' as this text remains a contextually important text for our students and is paramount to aiding students to access the ever-prevalent theme of social responsibility. The 15 poems from the 'Past and Present AQA Anthology (Conflict)'; as well as 'Unseen Poetry' remains an integral part of the course as the department strives to introduce students to a wider range of unseen contextual texts.

However, we have chosen to teach the English Language Key skills thematically to increase pupils' exposure to text, cultural capital and to support the building of schemata (archetypes) to support reading comprehension.

In English Language, the department teaches the core exam skills through the following cultural themes:

- Culture, Community and Identity;
- The Power of Nature;
- Tolerance, Respect and Responsibility;
- Love and Relationship and
- Journeys.

The themes covered in English Language are transferable to English Literature and, in teaching around this concept, the department is also able to support in delivering core RE at KS4, PSHE and RRSA; we believe cross referencing this content strengthens pupils' skills in text (and context) exploration.

In Year 10, the primary aim is to introduce students to the AQA GCSE Language and Literature course. In Year 11, we use regular mock exams to create a bespoke curriculum designed to fill knowledge gaps (both substantive and disciplinary) identified by assessment data.

Why?

At TPA, we recognise that many of our students will enter KS4 without the necessary reading skills to access the demands of KS4 English. We consider:

- GCSE exams require an average reading age of 15+ years
- Nationally, 25% of 15-year olds have a reading age below 12 years – this data is particularly relevant to our context
- The reading gap has, almost certainly, widened during lockdown

- Our pupils have significant gaps in their cultural capital; this results in gaps in reading comprehension skills
- This is not just about English: an effective strategy for the teaching of reading comprehension (at KS4) will *transform life chances*.