

Curriculum

English

General Policy

The Following Departmental Policies have been put together over recent years:

Assessment, Marking and Reporting Policy

1: Principles

We believe that the good assessment of our pupils requires:

- (a) clear **awareness** by us of the curricular contexts of work done;
- (b) **appropriateness** of the demands of the work;
- (c) **positive recognition** of strengths before diagnosis of weakness;
- (d) **observation** of processes as well as of products;
- (e) **consideration** of unexpected as well as of intended outcomes;
- (f) **reference** to the widest and fullest evidence available;
- (g) **involvement** of and understanding by the pupils with opportunities for their self assessment;
- (h) **availability** of information about each pupil's progress to the pupil and to the agreed third party.

2: Practice - General Considerations

We individually and collectively engage in the:

- (a) development of schemes of work in Years 7-11 to ensure appropriate access and progression to all pupils in covering Key Stages Three and Four of the National Curriculum;
- (b) continuation of work in years 12 and 13 relevant to the Aims and Objectives of the A Level specification of AQA examination board;
- (c) application of consistent standards across the Department and in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum, OCR, and the AQA Board where appropriate;
- (d) selection and retention of work by all pupils for assessment, moderation and inspection;
- (e) recording of individual and class curricular achievements and the relevant transfer of records between teachers, and to other schools when necessary;
- (f) reporting in line with the school Reporting policy whether for diagnostic, formative or summative purposes;

(g) continuation of relevant INSET for existing and new members of the Department;

(h) and in adherence to the school Reporting policy in the completion of pupils' interim and bi-annual reports and in the sitting of Key Stage Three, GCSE and A Level examinations

3: Practice for Particular Years

(a) Pupils in Years 7, and those entering Years 8 and 9 from outside, are issued with files for the retention of work on A4 paper, including some evidence of earlier drafts. These files are looked after by teachers.

(b) Pupils' files contain record sheets upon which additional information is recorded, including:

(i) achievement in speaking and listening activities ;

(ii) reading records for details of wider reading ;

(iii) fiction and non-fiction reading walls to recommend and stimulate wider reading.

(c) Exercise books are retained by pupils for work-in-progress. They are called for by teachers when evidence of work beyond that in the files is called for.

(d) Departmental moderation of work occurs each year during the Teacher Assessments for Key Stage Three, and during the marking of the internal examinations in the Summer Term for Years 7 and 8. Examples of moderated work are available for reference in Resources Room 2.

(e) Moderation of speaking and listening work takes place as a part of the Department's internal moderating cycle or during departmental meetings with activities recorded on audio or video tapes.

(f) For Years 10 and 11, all written coursework items are retained in fresh files issued at the start of Key Stage Four. New index sheets are issued. Final selection of coursework is made in March of the year of the examination, in discussion with the pupils. Moderation of written coursework takes place during departmental meetings, and evidence of this is kept in Resources Room 2. Moderation of speaking and listening work follows the same procedure as with Lower School pupils.

(g) Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are responsible for retaining their notes, drafts and final written work. Moderation of work occurs after the Autumn Term examinations in Year 12, and the preliminary examinations in Year 13. Teachers also confer over shared sets regularly.

4: Marking Practice

(a) In all year groups, clear comments are given to commend positive achievement, to correct or identify mistakes and to offer advice about improvements of content, presentation, reference or style.

(b) Extended comments and teachers preferred symbols or abbreviations should be understood and made known to pupils.

(c) Work set, to be done by pupils both in and outside of lesson time, will be checked on a regular basis.

(d) In Years 7 - 9, a piece of folder work is set and marked at least every fortnight.

(e) In Years 10 and 11, coursework is set and marked at least every three weeks, including speaking and listening assessments.

(f) In Years 7-11, general notes in exercise books are checked and marked at least once every half term.

(g) In Years 12 and 13, work is marked on a regular basis, and sets of notes are checked when staff have cause to suspect that note-taking has been unsatisfactory.

(h) In all year groups, work is returned within a week of being collected in, except when holidays intervene.

It should be noted that drafts of work are also checked on a regular basis by staff and that a record of this assessment is purely for the pupil concerned, and may not necessarily be kept by the teacher.

5: Reporting Practice

This is in common with the School's Reporting Policy and the Common Marking Scale.

6: Monitoring

It is recognised that the HoD is responsible for ensuring that these standards are met within the Department. Monitoring therefore takes place on a regular basis, where the HoD aims to observe each member of the Department teach on a termly basis, including the observations of the School's appraisal process as outlined in the *Performance Management Policy* document. Standards of assessment and reporting are included within this process. For more details see below.

*From the academic year 2000-2001, an English Department Pupil Assessment Database is being kept using **Microsoft EXCEL**. This records all major assessments of all pupils in the subject, from Key Stage Three to AS/A level. It is intended that teachers update the records of the pupils they are responsible for, and that members of the Department taking on new groups use the records to brief themselves on the progress of their new pupils.*

Departmental Monitoring and Shared Good Practices

It is recognised that, in order for a department to function effectively, it is important to monitor standards of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting. It is equally important to ensure that members of the department feel supported and informed, and in a position where they can observe, share and discuss good practices. It is intended that this policy initiates and supports this process in a positive way both within and beyond the School's Performance Management system.

1. Lesson Observation

It is the role of the HoD to monitor standards of teaching and learning within the English lessons. Within the English Department, each member of the Department will be observed by the HoD once a term. These observations will be used to monitor:

— • planning and evaluation including evaluation of pupils' levels, the requirements of the

- National Curriculum linked to Departmental aims and Schemes of Work, the needs of pupils and the adoption of appropriate strategies, and the preparation of effective resources;
- ● teaching methods and strategies including the appropriate range, communication skills with pupils, levels of motivation and the optimising of potential, and responses to classes and individuals;
 - ● classroom management including physical and social environments, time management, and resource management;
 - ● assessment, recording and reporting including the use of appropriate strategies for formative and summative assessment, promotion of pupils' capacity for peer and self assessment, and effective assessment, recording and reporting generally.

It is intended that all observations will result in feedback within 24 hours of the lesson. A lesson observation that is a part of the official appraisal process will count as the termly observation.

2. It is recognised that impressions cannot be formed from observations of single lessons alone. It is therefore intended that departmental activities can be monitored through informal conversations and through sampling written assessment, exercise books, recording of assessment and reporting to parents. Feedback will also be given where this is done, and opportunities given for a two-way discussion.

3. Monitoring should be a two-way process. It is therefore intended that each member of the Department should have the opportunities to raise issues during these discussions, which may fall into the following areas:

- schemes of work, the National Curriculum, GCSE and A level syllabi;
- resources;
- teaching strategies and the sharing of good practice;
- assessment and reporting issues;
- staff development and staff relations issues;
- issues relating to individual pupils or classes;
- any other areas of concern.

4. Colleagues also have the opportunity to observe each other during the year. It is intended that each member of the Department observe another member on one or two occasions during the academic year, and share any good practice and experience with the rest of the Department (where there is mutual consent) during departmental meetings. All planned observations should be briefly outlined beforehand in writing by the observer, and a copy should be given to the Head of Department.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

1. We recognise that our pupils have different capabilities and needs. To provide a pupil-centred curriculum varied teaching methods are used. In the majority of lessons, pupils undertake common or compatible tasks after introductory strategies involving the whole class in which guidelines are established. At times, a choice of tasks will be offered or allocated. Pupils may be advised as to which task best suits their needs and ability; and in other common tasks differentiation will be by outcome.
2. Many strands in the English syllabus are recursive. Therefore, pupils are able to reinforce their learning of concepts, skills and knowledge. Pupils receive extension work for the more complex of these strands, both for the more able to be stimulated, and the most motivated to feel rewarded. Both functional and contextual learning take place and interact, particularly where pupils are encouraged to inform and therefore educate each other under the teacher's supervision.

3. At times a variety of resources will be used to allow differentiation to occur. These resources will more often be provided by the teacher, but at other times by the pupils themselves.
4. Each pupil's progress is monitored by the recording process (c.f. Assessment, Marking and Reporting Policy) which gives pupils ample opportunity for written self-evaluation. On a regular basis, teachers engage in direct conversation with individual pupils, especially in cases where difficulties or underachievement arise.
5. A proportion of lessons involve co-operative learning by the use of paired, small group and larger group activities. Teachers will vary the pattern of group formations by direction and self selection where appropriate, to provide the most effective learning environment for the task. Compensation for less socially poised pupils is made by careful allocation to groups and of the tasks given.
6. The School's policy for Special Educational Needs is followed by the teachers of English. At the start of Year 7, a common writing task is set across the year group in English lessons to identify any specific literacy needs in pupils. Individual pupils with learning difficulties or exceptional abilities are identified during the formal screening process and when their needs are evident. The teacher and the HoD will work with the SENCO to address subsequently identified needs.
7. English lessons at BWS contain a number of recurrent features which include:
 - *ensuring the pupil finds success, however small, at as early a point as possible, and awarding positive practice for achievements as directed by the rewards procedure of the School's Behaviour Policy*
 - encouragement and motivation of individuals balanced by an expectation of mutual respect;
 - emphasis upon first hand experience and reference to pupils' lives outside of school;
 - a range of teaching methods in addition to those mentioned above, including use of open-ended questions, didactic instruction, use of audio-visual and other resources, teacher involvement in tasks set, and the provision of models of work to emulate or surpass

Discipline

The Department follows the School's *Behaviour Policy*, and the agreed *Ground Rules* apply to all English lessons. Clear, prompt communication should be made to the HoD, tutor or pastoral head as appropriate, where problems are respectively academic or behavioural. Lost or damaged departmental books or resources must be paid for.

Extra - Curricular Activities and Departmental Visits

1. It is recognised that the health of the Department's work is not solely evident in its contractual, salaried work as laid down by the Governing Body in individuals' job descriptions.
2. The *voluntary* supervision or direction of extra-curricular activities is encouraged for the benefit and interest of members of the Department, as well as for the pupils concerned, and thus the whole school.
3. It is recognised that any non-statutory activities may be initiated by members of the Department or undertaken, by consenting to a request from the HoD or the Senior Management Team.
4. All pupils should be allowed and encouraged to develop their interests and skills in activities related to English, such as in visits to the theatre, writing for pleasure and publication, and in public performances.
5. When taking pupils on educational visits off site, members of the Department will observe the guidelines of the relevant areas of the School's *Health and Safety* policy, as well as following the departmental guidelines for theatre visits.

Homework

1. The Department follows the School's *Homework Policy* for Years 7 to 11. For Years 12 and 13 c.f. page 11.
2. Homework may comprise one or more of the following:
 - writing (whether note-making, drafting or final draftwork);
 - preparation of materials for class presentation or discussion;
 - interviewing or other oral activities;
 - reading, reference and research;
 - completion of classwork
3. Teachers will regularly check that homework is being completed through checking of exercise books, taking in written work and discussion with pupils). As far as possible, teachers set homework that is suitable for the ages and ability levels of their students. It is recognised that at times expectations for pupils to exceed the time allocated is necessary. On rare occasions, such as Speech Day, it is appropriate for none to be set.
4. It is expected that homework is set, completed and handed in punctually. Pupils requiring an extension for a major piece of work should be in a position to show their current progress to their teacher, and should ask for the extension at least 24 hours before the original deadline. Discrepancies should be dealt with solely by the teacher using the appropriate sanctions available. In the event of recurring difficulties, the pupil's tutor is consulted and if appropriate, the pastoral head.

Staff Development

1. In common with the School's *Staff Development Policy*, the professional needs of members of the Department are expected to be met, whether in the mandatory requirements of appraisal or in other discretionary aspects of their work.
2. Regular attendance at relevant courses or conferences is encouraged for all members of the Department. The subsequent briefing of colleagues is appreciated.
3. A clear focus on future needs of professional development should be achieved, ideally during the appraisal process and through consultation with the Staff Development Co-ordinator.
4. It is recognised that worthwhile in-house training regularly occurs as a natural feature of good, close professional working relationships.
5. It is beneficial for the Department if at least one member is on the Staff Development Committee. Two are at present.

Key Stage 2 Liaison

1. With the development of the National Curriculum, there is great importance placed on pupils having continuity of experience as well as allowing for the progression of major changes of curriculum organisation and teaching methodology encountered in secondary schools. A record of the pupils' Key Stage 2 Assessment levels are transferred into the department's Pupil Assessment Database at the start of Year 7.
2. A member of the Department is represented on the 11+ review Panel, giving aspects into Year 6 work in a variety of the forty or so feeder schools. In the past, the Department has liaised with St. Mark's Junior School on this subject, and it is hoped that this experience can be extended elsewhere.

Partnerships with Parents and Governors

1. Parents

1. In common with school practice, members of the Department undertake to consult with and respond to parents in academic, pastoral and extra-curricular matters of relevance. In addition, the HoD holds weekly 'surgeries' after school to approach parents' as well as pupils' concerns within the subject area.
2. Attendance at Parents' Evening for year groups allows clear reference to pupils' work and to teachers' records.
3. Communication with parents beyond routine matters at other times is made with the tutor's knowledge or, in the case of a more serious matter, with liaison with the appropriate pastoral head.
4. All parents are informed at least once during the academic year that, upon written request, pupils' work can be released to them.

2.Governors

1. Liaison with members of the Governing Body is welcomed at all times, and visits by them to lessons and other events are welcomed. Governors wishing to be more closely linked to the Department are welcomed by prior arrangement to school to meet the staff, visit classes and view facilities and resources.