

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Context

The English Department at Valentines is vibrant and successful. The department plays a key role in raising attainment and improving the life chances of the students. Attainment in all key stages is well above the national average. This is a significant achievement given the diverse and multi-cultural intake, where over 80% of pupils have English as an additional language. The department plays a key role in the Teaching School and programmes and staff have many professional development opportunities to work with colleagues elsewhere as a result.

Structure

The English Department consists of a Head of Department, a Deputy Head of Department, 2 teachers i/c of key stages, and five other staff. All are specialists and teach across the age and ability range. All members of the department are expected to contribute to the development of the English curriculum. Maintaining high standards, marking, assessing and reporting pupil progress are an important part of the department's policy.

The department enjoys a wide range of resources, including a variety of texts for each year group. There are audio-visual resources as well as easy access to an IT base. Students are also encouraged to make full use of the school library which is run by a full-time librarian and also has IT facilities.

Class sizes vary, with bottom sets usually being the smallest. Setting is in place from years 8-11. Some groups benefit from in-class support provided by the Special Educational Needs and Minority Ethnic Achievement Departments with whom the English Department work closely.

All students in years 10 and 11 follow the Edexcel GCSE course in English Language and the AQA course in English Literature. The department enjoys successful examination results, with over 90% of students achieving a grade 4 or higher and over 30% achieving grade 7-9. We also deliver English resit classes in years 12 and 13. English Literature is a popular A level option and students follow the OCR syllabus. The department achieves excellent results at A level too with over 80% of students achieving grade C or higher last year. There are currently over 400 students in the sixth form, making it very large for a 6 F.E school.

The department works collaboratively whenever possible. All members of the department are expected to contribute to the development of schemes of work, participate in sharing good practice and work in teaching partnerships, either formally or informally.