

Rivers



Education Support Centre

KS4

English

Curriculum

Overview

2026/27

KS4 English Curriculum:

The English curriculum is designed to provide all pupils with a rich, ambitious and knowledge-led education that develops confident readers, writers and communicators. It is carefully sequenced to build disciplinary knowledge and skills over time, enabling pupils to make meaningful connections between texts, language and contexts while preparing them for further study and employment.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the principles of high expectations, inclusion and equity, ensuring that every pupil, regardless of starting point, background or need, can access and succeed within the full curriculum. The curriculum is planned and sequenced to support long-term learning, revisiting and extending key concepts through a coherent progression model.

The English curriculum at Rivers ESC reflects a focus on:

- Inclusion and belonging for all learners.
- High-quality curriculum design and implementation.
- Adaptive teaching that secures access to learning.
- Ambitious outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Strong literacy development across the curriculum.
- Evidence-informed practice and removal of barriers to achievement.

The Rivers ESC KS4 English curriculum offers a broad programme of study and students work towards qualifications that will improve their reading and writing skills, and their ability to communicate effectively in real-world contexts. Our aim is to ensure that all pupils can read, write and communicate effectively, while developing an appreciation of literature and the power of language.

All students undertake a baseline assessment upon enrolment to ascertain their current working grade. This will help identify any gaps in learning, their current grade and their equivalent STEPS level, thus supporting future lesson planning and personalised learning. Student attainment will be tracked once a fortnight using purple sheets in line with students' current targets and areas of improvement outlined by the teacher.

The English curriculum at Rivers ESC KS4 is designed to equip students to develop their literacy skills in reading and writing, along with the communication and critical thinking skills needed for GCSE success, further education, employment and adult life.

The English curriculum at Rivers ESC consists of:

- **AQA GCSE English language Paper 1 and Paper 2 (Year 11)**
- **AQA GCSE Spoken language endorsement (Year 10 and 11)**
- **EDEXCEL GCSE English literature Paper 1 and Paper 2 (Year 10)**
- **Pearson Functional skills English – Level one and two (Year 10 and 11)**

Course Specifications

AQA GCSE (Grade 1-9) **English language:** Linear course - No coursework – two exams (20th or 21st century fiction + creative writing, and 19th, 20th or 21st century non-fiction + transactional writing).

AQA GCSE (Pass, Merit, Distinction) **Speaking and Listening:** No longer a percentage of the qualification for the GCSE Language, this is recorded and certified separately.

Edexcel GCSE (Grade 1-9) **English literature:** Linear course - No coursework – two exams.

Literature Component Paper 1 -

- Shakespeare's '**Romeo and Juliet**'
- Post-1914 Literature - '**An Inspector Calls**' by J B Priestley.

Literature Component Paper 2 -

- 19th century novel: '**A Christmas Carol**' by Charles Dickens
- Poetry since 1789 - Edexcel **Anthology of Poetry (Power and Conflict)**
- **Unseen Poetry**

Pearson Functional Skills English (for both Level One and Two)

Functional skills provision is delivered for: students on short-term placements, those with high absence at risk of not achieving or those who have successfully completed their 'Speaking and Listening' assessment.

Through Functional Skills English, students develop their reading through a range of non-fiction texts including retrieval of information, use of presentational devices and comparing texts using evidence from the text. Students will also:

- Write non-fiction texts in a range of formats from a given task.
- Prepare and deliver a presentation on a given topic.
- Engage in a group discussion on a given topic.

Year 10 Curriculum Offer

English Literature Paper 1 and 2

Year 11 Curriculum Offer

English Language Paper 1 and 2

Purpose of Study:

The curriculum develops students as readers, writers, speakers, listeners and thinkers, ensuring all learners can access ambitious texts whilst developing practical literacy skills for life and work. The curriculum aligns closely with the aims of GCSE English Language and Literature specifications, focusing on reading critically, writing effectively, communicating confidently and responding thoughtfully to texts and the wider world. Students look at a range of fiction and non-fiction texts which will further develop their reading, vocabulary and inference skills.

In Rivers ESC English, we aim to:

- Develop students' ability to speak, read and write fluently and communicate effectively.
- Encourage a lifelong appreciation and enjoyment of literature and reading.
- Enable students to read easily, fluently and with good understanding.
- Develop the habit of reading widely and often for both pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide vocabulary and a strong understanding of grammar and linguistic conventions.
- Appreciate the richness and diversity of the English language.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Use discussion and spoken language to learn, express ideas and build understanding.
- Develop confidence in presenting, debating and listening to others.
- Gain knowledge of literary heritage through the study of a range of texts, including classic and contemporary works.
- Develop critical thinking skills by analysing and evaluating writers' ideas, methods and viewpoints.
- Understand how language can be used to influence, inform and entertain different audiences.
- Become competent, confident communicators who can participate fully in education, employment and wider society.

Importance of the Subject:

This curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils achieve, belong and thrive, developing the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to become successful learners and active participants in society.

Across all English qualifications, students at Rivers ESC develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to improve and become:

- Fluent critical readers.
- Effective and adaptable writers.
- Confident speakers and listeners.
- Independent learners.
- Successful candidates for further education, training and employment.

The curriculum is underpinned by the belief that strong literacy and communication skills empower students to participate fully in society and achieve their future aspirations.

Key Curriculum Principles

- **Ambitious for All.** All pupils study a challenging and broad curriculum that promotes academic excellence and cultural capital.
- **Inclusive by Design.** Learning is planned to remove barriers and maximise participation for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, and those who may face additional challenges.
- **Adaptive Teaching.** Teachers adapt instruction, scaffolding, questioning and resources responsively to meet individual needs whilst maintaining high expectations and access to the same curriculum entitlement.
- **Careful Sequencing.** Knowledge, vocabulary and skills are deliberately sequenced from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 4, enabling pupils to build secure understanding and retain learning over time.
- **SEND Accessibility.** Reasonable adjustments, targeted support and evidence-informed strategies ensure pupils with SEND can access, engage with and achieve success within the curriculum.
- **Literacy Across the Curriculum.** Reading, writing, vocabulary development, oracy and disciplinary literacy are explicitly taught and reinforced across all subjects to improve outcomes and close attainment gaps. Students frequently enter creative writing competitions with several poetry and book events throughout the year where students receive free books to take home.
- **Reading at the Heart of Learning.** A culture of reading is promoted through exposure to challenging texts, independent reading opportunities and explicit reading instruction. Through our school wide literacy initiative, students routinely

read during morning form times as a form group. Students can practise reading aloud, as a group and independently, alongside form-tutor led discussions on character, themes and storyline. Students also take part in National Poetry Day, World Book Day, and have access to *That Reading Thing* and *Sparx Reader*.

- **Knowledge-Rich and Culturally Diverse.** Pupils encounter a broad range of literary heritage texts alongside contemporary and diverse voices, enabling them to understand different perspectives and experiences. Students will attend a theatre trip, such as visiting Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.
- **Preparation for Future Success.** The curriculum develops critical thinking, communication, creativity and resilience, preparing pupils for the future.

Improving Literacy

In English students will develop their literacy skills with literacy intervention focused 1:1 teaching or in a small group. These lessons will consolidate the school-wide literacy focus to improve our students' reading, writing, spelling and phonetic skills. Through *Sparx English* and *That Reading Thing*, students will improve their reading skills in supported teacher led sessions.

Big Ideas/Key Concepts:

By the end of KS4, students will:

- Read critically and confidently across a range of texts (and/or will have improved)
- Write accurately and effectively for different audiences and purposes.
- Analyse how writers use language, structure and form to create meaning.
- Communicate confidently through spoken language.
- Develop resilience and independence as learners.
- Achieve recognised qualifications in English.
- Possess the literacy skills required for further education, employment and everyday life.

Year 10: English Literature

Term	Unit Title	Big Ideas
Autumn 1	Power and Conflict Poetry	How writers present power, conflict and identity through language, structure and form. Poetry reflects human experiences, perspectives and the impact of society, war and nature. Comparing writers' methods develops critical thinking.

Autumn 2	Romeo and Juliet	Literature reflects society and can inspire change. Dickens explores social responsibility, poverty, redemption and the consequences of inequality through character, setting and symbolism. Writers use structure, language and context to communicate moral messages. Readers evaluate how Dickens presents transformation and challenges Victorian attitudes. Love, conflict and fate shape human lives. Shakespeare explores family loyalty, prejudice, violence and the consequences of impulsive decisions within a patriarchal society. Shakespeare uses dramatic methods to explore relationships, identity, honour and responsibility. Understanding context deepens interpretation of character and theme.
Spring 1	Romeo and Juliet	Literature reflects society and can inspire change. Dickens explores social responsibility, poverty, redemption and the consequences of inequality through character, setting and symbolism. Writers use structure, language and context to communicate moral messages. Readers evaluate how Dickens presents transformation and challenges Victorian attitudes. Love, conflict and fate shape human lives. Shakespeare explores family loyalty, prejudice, violence and the consequences of impulsive decisions within a patriarchal society. Shakespeare uses dramatic methods to explore relationships, identity, honour and responsibility. Understanding context deepens interpretation of character and theme.
Spring 2	An Inspector Calls	Society functions best when individuals accept responsibility for one another. Priestley challenges inequality, class, gender expectations and capitalism through dramatic techniques. Writers use drama to influence audiences and promote social change. Characters and dramatic structure reveal different attitudes towards responsibility, power and morality.

Spring 2	AQA Spoken Language Assessment Endorsement English Functional Skills Discussions	Effective communication requires speakers to adapt language, organisation and delivery to suit audience and purpose. Listening carefully, responding thoughtfully and presenting ideas confidently are essential life skills.
Summer 1	Revision of all components and GCSE Examinations	Successful learners draw together reading, writing and speaking skills, applying knowledge of language, structure and exam strategies confidently across a range of unseen texts and writing tasks.
Summer 2	Revision of all components and GCSE Examinations	Reflection, retrieval and deliberate practice strengthen confidence and independence, enabling students to communicate clearly and respond effectively in examination conditions.

Our English curriculum ensures that students leave Rivers ESC as confident, resilient young people who can communicate well, think and read analytically, and write effectively; ultimately preparing our young people for their next stage of college education, training or employment.

Promoting British Values:

The GCSE English Literature curriculum at Rivers ESC provides valuable opportunities to promote the fundamental British Values through the study of a range of literary texts.

Democracy

Students are encouraged to discuss, debate, and evaluate different viewpoints presented in literature. Through class discussions and written responses, students learn to justify their opinions using evidence and consider alternative interpretations. Students do this by exploring differing perspectives on responsibility and social change in *An Inspector Calls*, discussing conflict and power imbalances in the *Power and Conflict* poetry anthology, and by developing and defending personal interpretations of characters and themes in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Rule of Law

Students examine how laws, social expectations, and consequences shape characters' lives and decisions. Exploring the consequences of breaking social and family expectations in *Romeo and Juliet*, examining social responsibility and moral accountability in *An Inspector Calls*, and investigating Victorian attitudes towards crime, poverty, and social justice in *A Christmas Carol*.

Individual Liberty

In English, students explore themes of freedom, choice, identity, and personal responsibility, whilst developing their own critical responses to texts. Students explore this when analysing Romeo and Juliet's desire to make independent choices despite family pressures, through exploring Scrooge's transformation and ability to change his behaviour in A Christmas Carol, and by examining individual experiences and responses to conflict in the poetry anthology.

Mutual Respect

Respect is at the heart of Rivers ESC, and our Literature study encourages students to understand the experiences, emotions, and viewpoints of others, fostering empathy and respectful discussion amongst peers. Pupils consider the consequences of prejudice and discrimination in An Inspector Calls, explore relationships, loyalty, and family conflict in Romeo and Juliet, and reflect on the human impact of war and conflict through poems such as Remains and Poppies.

Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs

Students engage with texts from different historical periods and social contexts, helping them develop an understanding of diverse beliefs, values, and experiences. They will explore teachings about charity, compassion, and redemption in A Christmas Carol, and show understanding of the changing attitudes towards class, gender, and social responsibility in An Inspector Calls. They will also examine a range of cultural, political, and historical perspectives presented in the Power and Conflict poetry anthology.

Useful website links with details of course books:

[GCSE English Language AQA](#)

[GCSE English Literature Edexcel](#)

Staffing Information:

Name	Position	Email Address	Telephone
Mrs Bronagh Faulkner	English Teacher Teaching and Learning KS4 Lead KS3 (Wed) KS4 (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)	bronagh.faulkner@riversesc.herts.sch.uk	01992 534841 Ex 213
Miss Tina Culora	English Teacher KS3 (Wed) KS4 (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)	tina.culora@riversesc.herts.sch.uk	01992 534841 Ex 217