

English Department Statement of Intent

OCL Brislington: A beautifully unique curriculum but built on rock solid foundations.

Brislington English Department 2023-2024



Expert. Passionate. Professional.

Pillar	because...
Versatile vocabulary	we know that those rich in language can overcome disadvantage
Precise instruction	precise teaching supports the development of self-awareness and independence
Responsive teaching	immediate and precise teacher intervention is the most effective way to move all students forward.

Studying English is about crafting and understanding **words** and **meaning**, which is at the heart of everything. At Brislington, our curriculum is in-line with our ethos to deliver exceptional education at the heart of our community thus allowing students **to stand as first amongst equals** when they venture out into the global community. We know and understand that it is our moral purpose to not only close gaps and breakdown barriers for our most vulnerable students, but also to provide the opportunity for all students, no matter their starting point, to thrive and grow as both scholars and as human beings. As **passionate professionals**, we value **careful planning** and **rigour**. We know that students at Brislington come from a range of backgrounds and therefore our curriculum aims to provide opportunities for them to encounter diverse writing, interrogate language and share their ideas. In line with the OCL curriculum, we believe that rigorous instruction drives creativity and empowerment – we want our young people to have the foundational knowledge that gives them the **power and confidence** to express themselves **purposefully and joyfully**.

From the very start, we plan for students at Brislington to encounter texts from a **range of important voices, times, and places, and develop an understanding of the nuances of literary craft**. In lessons, we want to see students reading and writing a lot and becoming more creative and confident because of the **specific, versatile knowledge** we teach. Through **explicit vocabulary and writing instruction**, we intend to give students the means to express their own, as well as others', complex ideas. As our students encounter others' **powerful stories**, we want them to develop and transform their own **powerful voices, regardless of their starting point**.

Students learn the connections between texts across times, places and genres and come to see how **literature engages and grapples with the complexity of the human condition**. Students first learn about **foundational concepts** which literature across the globe draws on: heroes and villains, love and conflict, monsters and the supernatural. They learn to identify the tropes of a classical tragic hero like Beowulf, Odysseus and Antigone and this gives them the tools to later understand Achebe's *Okonkwo*, and, by the time they reach Year 11, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. These ideas are not only intrinsic to literature, but also to the world around them – **with this specific knowledge teaching, we intend to empower our young people to be curious and critical in the way that they view the world**.

As their journey in literature continues, students encounter **writing which challenges these foundations**: the Romantic poets whose writing fought Industrialism, the Harlem Renaissance poets whose writing fought injustice and the modern playwrights who used theatre to denounce Capitalism. Our students therefore learn that, **through language, comes power**. We want our students to go on to become young people who can express their points of view, and who know that **understanding the past allows us to speak and write for change in the present**.

English teachers at Brislington are passionate about their subject and understand that our expertise is the most important tool in shaping the minds of the young people we serve. Because we understand the importance of our role and because **we love our subject**, we understand that knowledge and joy go hand in hand. We have chosen knowledge which opens doors, and we want our students to become enlivened by reading and writing when they see us model our own excitement about what we teach. We are precise with our delivery and meet to discuss the **clear path** we want students to take through a unit so that all students can understand and articulate sophisticated ideas. We are guided by specific theory about learning and curriculum and observe each other's lessons to ensure that we are all getting **a little bit better every day**.