



### ENGLISH AT DURHAM JOHNSTON COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

#### THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

This is a wonderful opportunity for a talented teacher to join an exceptional department. The English Department consists of sixteen well-qualified English teachers, who work together as an effective team.

The school has an extremely varied catchment area and the department has developed its teaching methods to cater for pupils of all abilities. This variety makes our approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs a major priority; we provide support teaching for weaker pupils as well as meeting the intellectual challenge of stretching the school's large number of very able pupils. The department has high expectations of all of its pupils, but also places great emphasis on care and support.

Teaching styles are high quality and student-centred and we make much use of group and drama activities. The department encourages an atmosphere of mutual respect between young people and teachers and aims to make every student's experience of English an exciting and enjoyable one.

In years **7-11**, students are grouped by ability. Years 7 and 8 are in bands of higher, middle and lower ability; whereas years 9, 10 and 11 are in sets 1-5/6.

In 2017, at **GCSE**, 83% of students achieved grades 9-4 in English Language and 67% achieved grades 9-5. In English Literature 82% of students achieved grades 9-4 and 69% of students achieved grades 9-5. In the sixth form in 2017, approximately 140 students studied either A-level English Language or Literature. Results at A2 are consistently excellent: 72% of A2 English Literature students achieved A\*-B grades in 2017 and 79% of all A2 English Language students achieved between A\*-B grades in 2017. A2 Media Studies grades are also extremely strong as 92% of students achieved between A\*-B grades in 2017.

In February 2015 we had an OFSTED inspection which judged the school to be outstanding. This and previous inspections have praised the English Department highly, singling the department out for its imaginative teaching strategies and the way students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning through lessons which make them active participants.

The department believes strongly in broadening and enriching the range of students' experiences through a variety of activities in and out of school and is always looking for new opportunities in this area. The school has a good reputation for its public speaking and debating teams as well as for its drama productions. Public Speaking is a compulsory part of the English curriculum in years 7 and 8.

The department is a strong team and encourages the full involvement of department members in its development through opportunities offered for taking a variety of responsibilities. This policy aims to make the most of individual expertise while furthering staff development. There are three management posts in the department.

The department does not rely on rigid and prescriptive schemes of work. The Key Stage 3 course consists of skills based units of work which form a core entitlement for every pupil. The scope that this offers makes the ability to take full professional responsibility extremely important. This is especially relevant to the study of literature, which the department sees as central to its teaching of English.

The department's recent Teaching and Learning report identified teaching that is characterised by: consistent use of activities which promote and develop thinking skills: clearly identified, explicit and shared objectives and success criteria. Activities which reflect the lesson objectives and ensure pace and challenge; use of drama techniques – students in role, hot seating, etc – to support and develop understanding of literary texts; well prepared materials and resources, often used creatively and taking into account needs and interests of students; open and challenging questioning to differentiate learning and suit the needs of all learners; clear and consistent feedback on how to improve, linked to shared success criteria and often exam assessment criteria and effective use of modelling and exemplar responses to support objectives and indicate ways to improve. The department is seeking an individual who can collaborate with other teachers within the department to develop our current practice.