



Great English Lessons at ECC

Our curriculum is informed by a clear intent for our learners. At granular level, lessons form part of a carefully planned teaching sequence; they are delivered with a view to enabling all learners to thrive, acquiring new skills as well as retrieving essential core knowledge.

Starting Off

Delivered in line with the Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, a great English lesson will start with learners developing their skills as independent readers as they engage with the AR reading programme. To enhance this process, teachers may well model the positive habit of reading themselves, or ask students a range of active reading questions to further encourage engagement and reflection. In terms of further questioning in the lesson, teachers will use cold calling to ensure participation from all learners, allowing thinking time as appropriate. Equally, targeted and more open questions may be used to draw out higher order responses from our lead learners.

Retrieval is an equally important part of English lessons at ECC and can take the form of retrieving information from last lesson, last week, last term or indeed last year. This retrieval may take the form of 'do it now' starter activities, discussion or supplements to core tests. Before new sequences are introduced, students are given some time to reflect on their previous learning and how their new knowledge will build on this; all students have 'Knowledge Wheels' in their books, designed to signpost their learning and time is given for students to reflect on this before new material is introduced.

English Department

Moving On

It is very important that new material is introduced in small steps; as such all lessons have a clear learning objective which may sometimes be differentiated to ensure all students can access the lesson successfully. Pre-teaching vocabulary ahead of a new topic is also typical practice.

We are proud of our diverse student body and recognise the skills and aptitudes of our SEND students. Personalisation for these students will depend on their level of need. For example, a SEND student with an excellent historical knowledge may be asked to take a leading role in discussion about the context of a poem; the same student may then be provided with scaffolding to support them in organising an essay response. All English teachers know the needs of their learners, keeping an up to date teaching file and personalising learning for their students accordingly. Visitors to lessons may see this personalisation through the seating of the learners in the classroom, differentiated resources, chunking information or the targeted deployment of our teaching assistants.

An effective lesson in ECC will see the teacher smoothly manage transitions between episodes and, crucially, checking on student understanding between these transitions. Students will have new skills modelled before being given opportunities to apply their new knowledge, thus building independence and resilience in the classroom ('I do, we do, you do' and 'Think, Pair, Share' are common practices in the department). Opportunities for active learning will be plentiful; after all, students learn best when they are challenged to think hard and for themselves!

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Depending on which lesson you visit, you may see teachers and support staff assessing students' progress more formally through the use of core knowledge tests, extended writing tasks or STAR reading tests, all of which enable us to gauge progress and plan the next stages of an individual's learning journey in English.

In line with key recommendations around literacy, a typical lesson will combine writing instruction with reading . Dictionaries and thesauri are available as standard and teachers refer often to crucial Tier 2 Vocabulary from the Knowledge Organisers. However, but some of the lessons we are most proud of are those that provide opportunities for structured talk; one of our key aims is to develop our learners' cultural and spiritual understanding of the wider world and our 'Call to Action' units see students researching a range of topical issues and working collaboratively to explore the conventions of formal and persuasive speaking. Expect noise in these lessons!

Securing Knowledge

Each lesson is part of a learning journey and plenaries to check student understanding can take a number of forms: teachers may choose to use a short quiz- or even by ask the students to write their own quiz to test a partner next lesson. Teachers may use targeted questioning to ensure key knowledge has been secured, or refer back to a learning question posed at the start of the lesson. Exit cards are also very popular with our students, who are invited to record a key learning point- or a key question- to hand in to their teacher at the door.

Our over-arching intention is to deliver lessons which enable every learner to feel both valued and accomplished. A great lesson in English will never 'look' a particular way: that is the beauty of our subject and its versatility. However, in every lesson, the subject teachers' skill and enthusiasm for their subject should be palpable; in turn learners will feel safe, engaged and encouraged at every step.

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