

How do you teach English at Milestone Academy

Milestone Academy is dedicated to providing our students with the best possible learning opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. In so doing, we recognise that outstanding English learning can support and develop students in all subject areas.

Therefore, in consultation with schools across Kent, we have developed a progress-based curriculum which will see students supported in an age and ability-appropriate manner, with opportunities for structured learning and clear progression steps.

The English Curriculum is divided into the four key strands as outlined in the National Curriculum (2014):

Strand	Subsidiary Strands
Writing	Handwriting Transcription Composition Vocabulary, Grammar, and Punctuation
Reading	Word Reading Comprehension Understanding Responding
Speaking	Expressive Communication
Listening	Receptive Communication

What will my student learn?

The English Curriculum at Milestone prioritises student needs, and provides the pathway for an individualised learning programme. Skills are linked to stages of development rather than to Key Stages or year groups, but they are enriched with age-appropriate content at every level. In other words, your student will learn the functional skills they need to communicate, read, and write at a level which is attainable for them, while still providing them with an element of challenge.

What texts do you use?

The content that is used to enrich English lessons at Milestone must adhere to two principles: it must be age-appropriate, and it must be a vehicle for learning new skills. It is up to your student's class teacher to select the text which will be used to make content engaging and enjoyable, though these selected texts come from a list maintained by the English leader.

How will you teach students to read?

We recognise that word reading is a very complex task, and that reading has a place both as a functional life skill as well as an independent leisure activity. Reading is therefore approached in a rigorous and multifaceted way.

Linking Text to Meaning: Before learning to read, students must first learn that text can mean something, and that letters and words are symbols that convey sounds and meaning.

Phonics: Many of our students will learn to read words using a phonics-based approach, where words are broken down into their individual letter sounds, and then “blended” together to make words.

Social Sight Vocabulary: Students learning to read will also need to recognise common vocabulary, such as exit signs, traffic signs, and public information. While these are commonly written as universal symbols, being able to read and understand these important symbols is as much a form of reading as decoding text.

Comprehension: Comprehension is the final stage in a student’s reading development, though they develop comprehension skills throughout their entire education. This could take the form of linking simple words to pictures, or answering questions from a member of staff or a peer.

Sensory Stories: Experiencing the thrill of a good story is an opportunity for every student at Milestone, and we strive to ensure that we have engaging, stimulating, multi-sensory stories available for all of our students to experience and enjoy.

Communication: Speaking and listening are key aspects of the English Curriculum at Milestone, and this is an area that is supported across the school.

Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 participate in Communication Groups, which are supported by our Speech and Language Therapy team. In this setting, our students can focus on individual and group speaking and listening targets, with specialised and individualised support where required.

English at Key Stage 5 (Further Education): The functional skills based nature of our KS5 education does imply some slight changes to the English Curriculum for our oldest students, and the primary difference is that at this point our students begin to seek accreditation.

While our students are still learning to read, write, speak, and listen, at this stage we are also seeking opportunities to record their achievement in a way that will provide them with opportunities after they leave us.

Where can I find more information about English at Milestone?

Our comprehensive progression curriculum for English is available at Milestone Academy to be seen by all of our families and guests.