

A Modern Pavior Tells us of his Time at High Pavement.

Most of us have recollections dating back more decades than we care, or are able, to count. Here, Gaige Bailey, a recent alumnus of High Pavement College and winner of the Stanley Middleton Literature Award tells us of his experience there.



Gaige Bailey

Looking back, what stands out most about my time at High Pavement from September 2022 to July 2024 isn't a single class or exam, but how much responsibility we were given for our own learning. It taught me that education isn't just about absorbing information - it's also about curiosity, discipline, and finding your own voice within the material.

The teaching methods used at High Pavement naturally vary, to some degree, by subject. During my time there, I studied A-Level AQA (Assessment and Qualification Alliance) English Literature,

Philosophy, and Psychology, so the majority of my lessons took the form of lectures focused on developing particular skills, solidifying our understanding of specific topics or issues, and engaging critically with the readily available textbook material. These lessons were almost always delivered via PowerPoint presentations on an interactive whiteboard. However, for English Literature, we were once taken on a trip to St Barnabas Cathedral in Nottingham due to its significance in the contextual history of Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock*, which was a key text in the crime genre we were studying. So, on certain occasions, lessons did extend beyond the classroom.

Given that AQA has published the entire body of required knowledge within two textbooks for each of my subjects - one for Year 1 and one for Year 2 - it was largely up to me how much I prepared for each lecture in advance by reading ahead. That being said, we were sometimes given small tasks to complete or consider before the next scheduled lesson.

I'm also aware that other subjects, such as Computer Science, Art, or Chemistry, are taught through lectures with more practical elements, but that was seldom necessary for my particular subjects. The biggest exceptions to this were when we held structured debates in Philosophy or when we were instructed to design and carry out an experiment in Psychology related to schizophrenia.

My work was assessed mostly through mock exams simulating the conditions and challenges of the final exams at the end of the two-year study period. My subjects were all heavily essay-based, so the majority of my mock exams involved writing essays under timed conditions. There were two exceptions to this general rule, both in English Literature. Part of my final grade for that subject was determined by two non-examined assessments (NEAs). These were 2,500-word essays (excluding quotations and bibliographies), in which you would choose your own question with a critical focus—Marxist, Feminist, Ecological, Colonial, Narrative, or Literary Value—and apply it to a prose text in one NEA and a poem in the other. For example, in my prose NEA, I wrote about H. P. Lovecraft's *The Complete Cthulhu Mythos Tales* from a literary value perspective, asking about its status in the Western literary canon and how much the mythos's success and longevity could be attributed to Lovecraft himself, as opposed to his successors. In my poetry NEA, I wrote about Dante's *Inferno*, analysing to what

extent the characters and settings of his epic poem were reflections of the author's own real-life circumstances. There were also numerous extracurricular activities available to students. For instance, I helped set up and run the High Pavement Chess Club as its President, hosting term-by-term tournaments, and I also took on some administrative tasks for the High Pavement Book Club, such as completing the weekly registers, to help the club's President with organisation. There were plenty of other opportunities made available to us by High Pavement outside of this, such as attending the Nottingham Climate Assembly in 2024 and a debate regarding the 2024 East Midlands mayoral election at the Nottingham College City Hub campus. In terms of clubs and societies, however, this was the extent of my participation. All in all, when I first walked into High Pavement, I did so as a mature student with nothing but a set of GCSEs to my name. By the time I completed my studies there, I left with a strong set of A-Level results, renewed confidence, and the readiness to move on to university and succeed. I owe that to the support I was given during my time there - something I'll always be grateful for, and one of the many reasons I'm glad I chose High Pavement as my institution for further education.

Kind regards, Gaige.