



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

English as an Additional Language Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Joint Heads of English as an Additional Language in the Senior School in conjunction with the Language and Learning Coordinator in the Junior School and the Head of Learning Support.

Last review: September 2022

Next review: Autumn term 2023

Overview

St Mary's School, Cambridge currently has 644 students on roll, of whom 72 are taught English as an Additional Language (EAL) and/or receive English language support. The Department for Education defines a pupil as having English as an Additional Language if:

"...she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. It is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration." [\[1\]](#)

Although many of our pupils with English as an Additional Language are already proficient users of English, having lived in Britain or studied in English for several years, some are admitted with English at Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level A2, B1 or B2. These students are taught EAL or receive support from EYFS to Key stage 4, as outlined in Sections 3 and 4 below. Our international Sixth Form students are prepared for the external IELTS examination to meet the English language requirement of their university applications, as outlined in Section 4.6.

Aims of the school for pupils with EAL

St Mary's School, Cambridge (the School) seeks to enable each EAL pupil, from EYFS to Sixth Form, including boarders, to develop the language skills needed

- to pursue her subject studies to the best of her ability and in doing so to be able to engage comfortably in both spoken and written discourse with clarity, precision, and fluency
- to benefit from the wide range of opportunities St Mary's offers to engage in extracurricular activities and work experience placements
- to develop strong relationships with those around her, including teachers and pupils of other nationalities
- to use English-language media to broaden her knowledge and understanding of the world
- to provide a sound basis for the continuation of her studies in further or higher education

- to pass external English Language examinations, such as IELTS in the sixth Form, with the grades necessary to access her chosen course in British or English-speaking institutions of higher education.

Junior School Procedures and Teaching

The pupil's first language and any other language spoken are discussed at the first meeting of the Head of Juniors with the prospective parents from which the pupil's needs are generally ascertained. Notes are taken on the pupil's level of English language support to date.

The interview for EYFS children and KS1 children, and the Entrance Examination for KS2 children, further determine the level of support likely to be needed on entry to St Mary's Junior School (the Junior School).

From the point of entry onwards, English language support is given as follows to pupils with EAL:

- The Reception teacher will plan a programme to provide opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English. The teacher will communicate with the parents/ guardians, using an interpreter if appropriate, so that the learning is understood and supported at home. It is important that the pupil also develops her home language in school and feels it is valued. To support development of their home language there will be opportunities to explore it, where possible, through books, role play, oral activities and making materials.
- A pupil with little/no understanding of English is given Speaking and Listening support including the teaching of phonics on a regular basis. All staff are informed, and they speak slowly and clearly to the pupil using strategies such as pointing or actions to help understanding within the classroom. Parts of the classroom/Junior School are named clearly if relevant, to aid learning. The pupil is monitored at playtime to ensure she is interacting with other children.
- Support at all levels is timetabled within the classroom, at lunch time for short periods and/or if appropriate at Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) times depending on the degree of need. Constant monitoring takes place and observation, meetings with teachers and parents and written assessments in all subjects inform the ongoing support required. The expectation is that support can be slowly withdrawn.
- Within the classroom support is given for all subjects using pictures, the interactive white board and tangible resources. Marking is done using ticks/stickers etc. which can be easily understood by the pupil. Work is discussed and explained at greater length to ensure understanding.
- Where necessary the parent or other person is welcomed into school to help with translation sessions. The pupil's parents are included in the learning by their ongoing support at home, which may be mutual support depending on the level of the parents' English. Materials and resources are given to the parents so that the support of the pupil's language development can continue at home. Depending on the level of English spoken at home, some other areas of the curriculum can also be supported by parents at home, through homework and project work. The level of help is proportionate to need.
- As a means of inclusion and supporting the Junior School's ethos of embracing diversity, opportunities will be given to the pupil and/or parents to share aspects of the home language and culture with the rest of the Junior School or class.

Senior School Procedures and Teaching: Pre-arrival assessment

International students

As part of the application procedure, international students who do not give English as their first language take the UKiSET test which includes an assessment of their English competency within the CEFR framework [2]. We also receive a sample of their writing in response to an essay title which is assessed in school by one of the Joint Heads of EAL. Based on this information, the Joint Head of EAL will make a recommendation to Admissions as to whether the applicant has a strong enough basis of English to be able to do herself justice within an English-language educational setting, given the year for which she is applying. The Joint Head of EAL will also recommend whether the applicant should have additional EAL support and what form this is likely to take, or whether the candidate's English is potentially strong enough to meet the demands of studying mainstream English Language and Literature. In the latter case, a joint decision is made with the English Department. Students who meet the required level will be given a poetry and creative writing task, followed by an interview with the Head of English in the first two weeks of the Autumn Term.

Students applying from within the UK

On application, all home students let us know of their first language and sit the Senior School's entrance examination. If language issues are evident for home students with English as an Additional Language, one of the Joint Heads of EAL is informed and offers guidance as above.

English language level guidelines

The language level required varies by year group and is given below. These levels are pinned to the widely recognised Council of Europe CEFR levels, which have now been adopted by the Cambridge English Language Examinations (see [Appendix](#)). On occasion we accept students who may not meet these standards, but who demonstrate potential. This is more likely to be the case in Year 7 and Year 8, as the students have more opportunity to improve their English before KS4.

<i>Year of entry</i>	<i>CEFR Level</i>
<i>Years 7 and 8</i>	B1.1 (low B1)
<i>Year 9</i>	B1.2 (strong B1)
<i>Year 10</i>	B2.1 (low B2)
<i>Year 12</i>	B2.2 (strong B2)

Monitoring on arrival

All EAL students from Year 9 to Year 13 sit our International Students Test (IST). This test is based on standardised external examination materials and is taken each year. This has three primary aims: first, to monitor student progress year on year; second, to indicate where students may need extra support or differentiated learning; and thirdly, to provide an indicative benchmark for an EAL student's potential to take mainstream English. Additionally, the UKiSET results can be cross-checked. Short-stay students may take an alternative paper-based test.

EAL in Year 7 and Year 8

Students with EAL entering the school in Year 7 and Year 8 are normally integrated into mainstream English classes with a specialist EAL teacher to support them in the classroom but may receive additional EAL teaching if a need for this is registered by the EAL department, their subject teachers, the students themselves or their parents.

EAL Support in Years 9 to 11

Students with EAL in Years 9, 10 and 11 who do not take mainstream (KS3 or GCSE/iGCSE) English are taught EAL. Our teaching objectives are given below. Year 10 students prepare for the Cambridge B2 First examination, and Year 11 students take the Cambridge C1 Advanced examination at the same time as other students take GCSE English. Some students who come to St Mary's for less than an academic year from countries such as Germany and Spain may take one of these examinations early so that their time at the school has a certificated educational outcome.

ELS Support (Years 7 to 11)

In addition, from Years 7 to 11, separate English Language Support (ELS) may be provided, with the specific aim of working with each student on their subject class work, coursework or homework. This is particularly helpful for subjects which are linguistically demanding, such as History or Religious Studies, but it may also be valuable to go through terminology and its pronunciation in maths or science subjects, or to help with projects such as geography presentations or experimental reports. ELS also offers those students with lower-level English the extra time needed to research and process content in a second language.

The EAL Department liaises with Heads of Department and subject teachers to co-ordinate support for individual students, where possible, and with curriculum content when appropriate. Subject teachers may refer specific pieces of work to ESL teachers; teachers are provided with paper and digital stickers to facilitate this.

Rarely, the School or the student themselves may feel that they are not best placed in ELS. A Joint Head of EAL will then liaise with subject teachers and the Director of Studies to check that work is being completed to a sufficient standard and to check timetabling options. Permission will be sought from the student's parents or guardians for a move to another subject.

The EAL Department also recommends that international students not taking EAL or ELS lessons make appointments to see EAL teachers if language difficulties are affecting their subject studies.

EAL teaching in Sixth Form

Lower Sixth students who do not already have an English Language qualification that meets their university entrance requirements are prepared for IELTS. This internationally recognised qualification assesses a student's listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills [\[3\]](#). Some Lower Sixth Students take the IELTS examination in June or earlier, and do not attend further classes, but others continue into the Upper Sixth with the aim of achieving better results or giving themselves more time to improve. Many Sixth Form international students see IELTS classes and useful preparation for the demands of speaking and writing in higher education.

It is EAL departmental policy that both Lower and Upper Sixth EAL students are offered assistance with presentations for special events such as the whole school assemblies, and Upper Sixth students routinely submit their UCAS Personal Statements for proofreading and comment. International students called for interview for Medicine, Speech Therapy, Art or Architecture, Fashion and Law are also assisted by the department in preparing for these.

EAL students accessing English language teaching: Additional notes

Although GCSE English and English Literature are not core GCSEs for EAL students, the School policy is not to exclude EAL students from GCSE English but to ensure each student is taking the course which will most benefit and best suit her as an individual. Every year there are between two and ten girls who take the two subjects (English Language and English Literature, taught together but examined separately) rather than the EAL option. Usually, these students also have some EAL support. Many go on to take the IELTS EAL qualification in the Sixth Form, since this international examination not only satisfies the English language requirements for international students for university entry in the UK, but is also acceptable to universities in Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand, as well as for the increasing number of English-medium university courses in Continental Europe.

Studying for English Language or English Literature GCSEs can be particularly challenging for EAL students with weaker English. It is worth noting that all students who have been here in mainstream English since Year 7 have studied a range of Shakespeare (in the original language and in full); several novels, including 19th century novels by writers such as Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen, and Charles Dickens – again, unabridged and unmodernised – and a range of poetry, mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries. This course prepares them for the very detailed and demanding study of Shakespeare, other drama, poetry, and novels at GCSE level.

In making this decision, the School will bear in mind the interests of any student whose first language is not English wishing to access the GCSE course, alongside their parents' wishes, the view of the class teacher, and matters such as class size.

It is in the interests of students new to the school in Year 10 who have been identified post-arrival as having the potential to cope with the challenges of GCSE Language and Literature and who wish to do so to move as quickly as possible. Until now this has taken place after the IST has been completed and marked. We aim to speed up this process from September 2022 onwards by putting in place the following procedure:

- Within two weeks of arrival, these students will sit the poetry analysis assessment set by the Department of English.
- Those students who perform well enough will meet with one of the Heads of English and be interviewed, and informed of the potential downsides to the move.
- In collaboration with the Director of Studies, their parents will be informed by email of the invitation to move to GCSE English and of the potential downsides to this.
- When parental consent has been received, the move will happen.

EAL Senior School Teaching Objectives

Linguistic

1. To enable students of all abilities to understand and use English effectively for communication in a range of contexts. This involves being able to understand and use a range of registers, both formal and informal; gaining mastery of the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing; being able to use grammar flexibly and accurately; and developing strong vocabulary. Contexts include but are not limited to working in the academic school environment, applying for work experience and university places, participating in voluntary work or challenges such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or a Model United Nations conference, and developing good everyday friendships and relationships.
2. To provide students with examination preparation for the Cambridge B2 First, Cambridge C1 Advanced and IELTS examinations which will enable them to achieve according to their capabilities.

3. To provide positive, effective, and enjoyable learning experiences which will give students confidence in their ability to make English an alternative means of communication and way of being themselves, and not just a means to an end.
4. To broaden students' experience of the world by requiring them to access English language news, information, and the arts from a wide variety of sources including print and web-based media in the hope that they will continue to do this on their own initiative.
5. To help students overcome errors that they may have developed in other learning contexts.
6. To develop language learning skills that will enable them to continue learning beyond school.
7. To promote learning skills of a more general application e.g. promoting automaticity, developing arguments, drawing of inferences, analysis.

Cultural / Social

1. To enable students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions.
2. To help students appreciate that in becoming very able users of English they need not forfeit their own national identity but should aspire to span two (or more) cultures and be at home in both (or all).

Methodological

1. To set up learning activities which provide
 - a. a feeling of success
 - b. intellectual stimulation and challenge
 - c. enjoyment.
2. To provide students with formative feedback on their contributions and homework, encourage self-reflection on their learning process, and foster a growth mindset.
3. To encourage and stretch students of all abilities to fulfil their potential for English language learning by using a variety of media as well as teaching and learning styles, adapting materials and activities to different levels of ability.
4. To use ICT to reinforce students' learning by drawing upon and developing their skills to produce clear notes, effective presentations, and aesthetically pleasing presentation of their written work, to give them the opportunity to record and improve talks and discussions and to encourage the use of suitable online learning resources.

Study Skills

1. To develop the ability to research, plan and organise their work and to work independently where possible.
2. To develop the ability to understand, present and evaluate arguments for and against controversial issues and to arrive at a defensible position both in speech and in writing.
3. To develop a pride in achievement through the encouragement of a methodical and responsible attitude to their work.
4. To ensure that, when students are working remotely online,
 - a. each student is aware of where they can find lesson recordings and copies of lesson materials
 - b. each student has the facility to store their digital work in Teams when appropriate

- c. each student is aware of the need to participate in lessons using their microphone and video camera as much as possible, where parental consent for video has been granted.
- 5. To familiarise students, where appropriate, with a range of online lexical reference sites such as the Cambridge Learner Dictionary, the Oxford Collocations Dictionary (www.ozdic.com), and the British National Corpus, which they can use at school, at university and beyond.

Notes and References

[1] English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language, Department for Education, 2020, ref. DfE-00052-2020. Available at [English Proficiency of EAL Pupils - GOV.UK](#)

[2] UKiset is an adaptive online entry test for international candidates applying for entry into the UK independent school sector. More information can be found at [UKiset - UKiset](#)

[3] For more information, see [IELTS Home of the IELTS English Language Test](#)

Appendix

CEFR Reference Scale

[Global scale - Table 1 \(CEFR 3.3\): Common Reference levels](#)
