ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

This is a whole school policy which applies to all sections of the School, including Early Years.

Persons responsible for this policy:
Deputy Head (Academic)

Date of last policy review:
September 2022

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

1.   **INTRODUCTION, AND AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

1.1.   English as an Additional Language (EAL) support may be available to pupils whose first language is not English. In practice, many EAL pupils at the School will not need language support, but for those that do, individual and / or group lessons will be offered. The primary aim of such support is to improve the pupil's range and accuracy in English.

1.2.   This policy should be read in conjunction with:

●   the Curriculum Policy and Teaching and Learning Policy; and

●   the SEND Policy.

1.3.   This policy has regard to Part 1 (Quality of education provided), Paragraph 2 (Curriculum) of the Independent School Standards Regulations.

2.   **ENGLISH ACQUISITION**

2.1.   In many schools, a simple 5-stage model (see below) of English acquisition is used to describe a pupil's capability in English. This is a 'best-fit' model and, though it is not detailed enough to be effectively used for target-setting or formative assessment, it does provide a simple and consistent model for use to make a general assessment. All pupils at the School have either passed entrance exams taken in English or have had their English language skills assessed formatively in an age appropriate manner; when examined, the School follows Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines where appropriate. Pupils at the School are almost inevitably at stage C, D or E (stages explained in 2.2). However, a pupil may still require support to achieve his full potential.

2.2.   The 5-stage model

A.   New to English

The pupil:

●   May use his first language for learning and other purposes.

●   May remain silent in the classroom.

●   May copy / repeat some words and phrases.

●   May understand some everyday English expressions but have minimal or no English literacy.

●   Needs considerable support.

B.   Early Acquisition

The pupil:

- May follow day-to-day social communication in English.

- May be beginning to use spoken English for social purposes.

- May understand simple instructions and be able to follow narrative accounts with visual support.

- May have developed some skills in reading and writing.

- May have become familiar with some subject-specific vocabulary.

- Still needs significant support.

C.   Developing Competence

The pupil:

- May participate in learning activities with increasing independence.

- May be able to express himself orally in English but structural inaccuracies are still apparent.

- May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English.

- Requires ongoing support with literacy, particularly for understanding text and writing.

- Requires support to access the curriculum fully.

D.   Competent

The pupil:

- Has oral English that is developing well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum.

- Is able to read and understand a wide variety of text.

- Has written English that may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure.

- Needs support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.

E.   Fluent

The pupil:

- Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his first language.

3. EAL ASSESSMENT

3.1.   A referral for EAL support can take any one of two routes:

A.   Pupils arrive at the School with a known EAL need and having received support at their previous school. This information is shared with the EAL coordinator by the Admissions department. The Head Master acts as the EAL coordinator, working closely with the Deputy Head (Academic) and the Heads of Section.

B.   Form Tutors or subject teachers, sometimes with the prior support or guidance of parents, might refer a pupil to the EAL coordinator (see Appendix 1: EAL guidance for subject teachers).

3.2.   Once a pupil has been referred for EAL support, examples of the pupil's work are sought from his subject teacher in English and / or his exercise books for a range of subjects are examined. This is checked and further tests are carried out, primarily the Oxford Placement Test (an adaptive testing which gives more accurate data about the pupil's needs.

3.3.   In carrying out this EAL assessment, an educational need or disability may sometimes be suspected. In this instance, a further referral to the Skills and Strategies team may be required. The SEND Policy provides more detail about this process.

3.4.   27% of the pupils at the School were reported by parents to be speaking another language at home (last survey conducted in September 2022), either in addition to English, or in preference to English. Many of these pupils would classify themselves as bilingual.

3.5.   The support provided by the EAL coordinator is often directed by the subject teacher in English (e.g. the teacher might report a problem with the correct use of adjectives / adverbs or misunderstanding of key vocabulary and these will be areas for study in the EAL support lesson).

3.6.   Further guidance for subject teachers may be found in Appendix 1.

4. INFORMATION SHARING

4.1.   Information about the identities of EAL pupils is available in iSAMS.

5. RESOURCES

5.1.   The resource bank for EAL support continues to be developed based on the specific needs of individual pupils. Please see the EAL coordinator for further information.

APPENDIX 1

EAL GUIDANCE FOR FORM TUTORS AND SUBJECT TEACHERS

1.   This guidance is general and not all of it will be relevant for subject-specific teaching.

2.   **Background to EAL at Dulwich Prep London**

EAL support (off-timetable lessons rather than in-lesson support) may be available to pupils whose first language is not English. In practice, many EAL pupils at the School will not need support, but for those who do, individual and / or group lessons may be arranged. The primary aim of such support is to improve the pupil's range and accuracy in English.

3.   **EAL Referral**

Referral for EAL support can take any one of two routes:

3.1.   Pupils arrive at the School with a known EAL need and having received support at their previous school.

3.2.   Form Tutors or subject teachers refer a pupil to the EAL coordinator.

4.   **Cultural Matters**

In addition to language problems, there may be cultural matters which staff need to be aware of when supporting pupils who speak a different mother tongue, issues that could hinder learning and which arise out of cultural rather than linguistic differences. Breaking down any cultural barriers identified can usually be overcome with patience, coaxing, praise for effort and sensitive handling of mistakes but it may take time. Another cultural factor can be an unwillingness to question a teacher as it is felt to be a mark of disrespect. This means that an EAL pupil may misunderstand something but not ask for clarification, and in answer to "do you understand?" reply "yes" even when they don't, as that seems to be the desired answer. Once again, these pupils need to be reassured that the School's normal way of teaching is a two-way process and that discussion and asking questions is encouraged. It may also be difficult for parents – who may themselves not speak English fluently – to raise language problems with the School and they may not wish to 'flag' their sons as struggling.

5.   **Tips for helping pupils with English in mainstream classes**

Included below are various tips gleaned from supporting EAL pupils. Not all will be relevant to Dulwich Prep London pupils (or to your specific subject), and many of the tips may seem obvious to experienced teachers, but it is better to include too many pointers than too few! Remember that what works for EAL pupils will also often work for all other pupils too, including pupils with SEND.

- Simplify the language not the content.
- Where possible, pre-teach subject-specific vocabulary.
- Illustrate and label diagrams.
- Develop and maintain lesson routines, reference points, etc.
- Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instruction.
- Announce lesson topics, announce section topics, exemplify, summarise the lesson.
- Provide frequent summations of the salient points.
- Read aloud; it helps if pupils can hear the words as well as see them on the page.
- Wait longer for answers to your questions; pupils may need time to process the language before they can think of the answer and then respond.
- Explain the purpose and rules of group or partner work; pupils may not be familiar with the concept of group-work or working cooperatively. You may need to teach them how to do this.
- Sit EAL pupils at the front so that you can see what they are taking down. For instance, it may help to check that they have written the details of homework correctly in their Prep Registers.
- Try to avoid idiomatic / colloquial expressions, e.g. "You are not making any headway", "have a go at it" or even "keep your eyes peeled"!
- Write instructions on the board – do not assume that verbal notices have been understood. If an instruction is not understood, re-phrase rather than repeat. You could ask the pupil to repeat it back if you are not sure if they have understood, in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Keep a corner of the board for writing key topic-related vocabulary as it comes up. Encourage pupils to copy this into the back of their books under the appropriate topic heading for ease of reference.