

Blundell's School TESOL (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Teaching Staff:

Mr J.M.Trew: BA (Hons) English Lit, PGCE, RSA Cambridge CTEFLa

Mrs. L.J.Chick: BA (Hons) Sports Studies, PGCE, RSA Cambridge CTEFLa

There are two teachers in the TESOL Department, Mr. Jass Trew (Head of Dept) and Mrs. Lucy Chick. Both are full-time members of staff with a wide-ranging involvement in the boarding and extra-curricular life of the school (tutoring, games and activities). They are therefore in school every day to be accessed by pupils, and have an excellent understanding of the different opportunities, pressures, routines and general features of the school year. The Department is geographically located at the very heart of the school and is therefore highly convenient for pupils.

Around 10% of pupils at Blundell's are international pupils, for whom English is not their native language; the proportion is slightly lower in the Junior Department and slightly higher in the Sixth Form. The Department is proud of its positive and supportive relationships with its pupils. The small size of the Department allows them to get to know individual pupils well, and provide an additional level of pastoral as well as academic support. International pupils are very well integrated socially amongst the pupil body, and careful thought is given to the important balance between developing their social confidence amongst fellow native speakers and building new friendships and relationships with British and other international pupils.

Aims of the TESOL Department

- International pupils will become confident and proficient in the use of English
- Pupils will enjoy learning through a friendly, communicative approach
- Pupils will receive support with coursework and homework whenever it is required
- Pupils will achieve a grade 'C' or above for English Language and Literature or a grade 6 or above on the IELTS exam, which will enable them to attend an English speaking university if desired. The IELTS examination is recognised by more than 6000 institutions across 120 countries, and is sat by 1.4 million candidates each year. (<http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>)
- Pupils will feel comfortable enough to discuss pastoral issues such as homesickness and coping with life in a foreign country
- Pupils will enjoy life at Blundell's, and be happy and successful

Arranging TESOL Lessons

Before being offered a place at Blundell's, we will assess a pupil's level of English with a test in order to ensure that their proficiency is high enough to be able to fully access the curriculum here and to be successful learners. Given that there is often a gap of several months between registering for a place and actually arriving at school, we will also assess them again when they arrive (including a verbal/listening assessment), so that we can update our understanding of their level of English and advise appropriately. If the level is very high, then little or no support is generally required, although we keep a close watch on their academic progress and can provide occasional lessons or support if requested. When a pupil finds studying in English more difficult, more formal support is arranged appropriately.

At this early stage, we consult closely with the Director of Studies and Houseparents to ensure that a realistic and appropriate timetable has been agreed upon. For some nationalities, the study of French, German or Spanish at Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) may not be necessary or appropriate. By

agreement, pupils may therefore have a small number of additional private study periods in the week or may attend extra TESOL sessions if human resourcing permits them to have more lessons.

TESOL lessons are taught either on a one-to-one basis, in pairs, or in small groups of four to six pupils. They are active and communicative, focusing on activities such as role-plays, games and discussions which will relax pupils and build confidence. Pupils learn language which is useful for both real life situations and academic study, and we will plan lessons to best respond to their needs and their rates of progress.

- In Years 7 to 9, pupils undertake lots of speaking and listening tasks that will build confidence and help them to cope and be successful in an English-speaking environment. All pupils follow a scheme of work, which is based on a textbook but very flexible, to allow time for help with coursework, or homework.
- In Years 10 and 11 we focus more on supporting GCSE level academic work, and begin preparing for the IELTS exam.
- In Years 12 and 13 pupils focus almost exclusively on preparing for the IELTS exam which is sat in April. They may receive additional help with A Level studies, if required. They may re-sit elements of the IELTS exam if needed during the Sixth form.

Use of Dictionaries in Lessons and Exams

All the international pupils are allowed to use a bilingual dictionary if required, and they should carry one with them all the time if needed. If they have been here for less than two years they are given up to 25% extra time in examinations to use the dictionary. We encourage them to look up unfamiliar words regularly, and all teachers permit electronic translators in lessons.

Beyond the classroom

The TESOL Department plays a central role in welcoming new international pupils and their families to the school at the start of the academic year with an induction day, allowing ample opportunity for individual concerns to be addressed. We also welcome communication before arrival if there are any queries at all. We take pleasure in celebrating the diversity of nationalities amongst the pupil body, and arrange for an International Students' Reception Evening early in September for all the pupils to meet each other socially. Cultural events such as Chinese New Year are also celebrated, and informal opportunities are always taken to deepen international awareness and understanding, both between British students and international pupils, and between the different nationalities who are attending Blundell's.

There are international groups of Old Blundellians located all over the world, where young and old pupils and ex-pupils get together and share memories, hospitality and life experiences. There are many examples of friendships forged here at Blundell's providing the foundation for international travel plans during University holidays or GAP years.

Costs

Pupils receiving TESOL lessons are billed an additional termly charge. Fees are published centrally by the School each year, and charges vary in order to reflect how many lessons the pupil receives, and if these are individual lessons or taught in a group.

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