



Blundell's

ENGLISH as an ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

2018/19

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EAL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Roughly 12 per cent of the student body at Blundell's is made up of international students, coming from countries such as China, Thailand, Spain, Hong Kong, the USA, Germany, India, South Korea, Mexico, Japan and France. The majority are not native speakers of English but arrive with some English. Their language needs are assessed on arrival and English language support is provided as required, both in subject lessons and in EAL classes. Through the school's positive, personalised, and inclusive approach, students are supported in achieving their academic potential and made to feel comfortable in their new learning and living environment.

The school aims to:

- Treat each EAL pupil as an individual with unique needs, skills and interests.
- Recognise their cognitive skills as distinct from their linguistic skills.
- Give students the language, cultural knowledge and communicative skills they need to practise and express their cognitive skills and achieve their best in all their subjects.
- Provide an environment where students can build confidence in their English skills.
- Provide EAL pupil with the skills they need to take responsibility for their own learning, asking questions, building good learning habits and reflecting on their progress.
- Harness the benefits of being an international community, highlight the value in cultural differences, and encourage respect.

The EAL department is proud of its positive and supportive relationships with its pupils. The small class sizes allow the teachers to get to know individual pupils well, and provide an additional level of pastoral care as well as academic support. The EAL teachers communicate regularly with tutors and subject teachers to ensure we are providing our pupils with what they need.

Entrance Requirements

We accept students who have a reasonable level of English for their age of entry, bearing in mind that pupils entering straight into examination year groups (Years 10, 11 and 12) need a level sufficient to allow them to access the curriculum.

Assessment

Students complete an assessment a few days after arriving at Blundell's and are assigned a band according to the Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment framework for Secondary Schools. With this knowledge, subject teachers and tutors can plan their lessons with the appropriate differentiation. This assessment also informs decisions on whether and how much each pupil requires focused support in the form of EAL lessons designed to support their development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

EAL Department

The EAL department is housed in three classrooms in the middle of the school campus. The staff comprises one full-time teacher and two part-time teachers, all of whom are qualified and experienced teachers, and have experience of living and working abroad. The EAL teachers are keen supporters of the international committee and regularly attend their events.

English as an Academic Language

Our students tend to pick up informal interpersonal English (or BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) quickly and easily, simply by being immersed in an English-speaking environment. Learning the skills for academic success (CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) can take 5-7 years and therefore requires greater support.

EAL Provision

The EAL department has three main roles:

- **Providing group and one-to-one lessons as required throughout the school in Years 7-13**

The focus of the EAL lessons is to build students' cognitive academic language proficiency to help them access the curriculum and maximise their outcomes. This is achieved through strengthening their communicative skills, boosting their academic vocabulary, developing their control of the language at word, sentence, paragraph and text level, and fostering good learning habits. Topics in EAL classes are chosen to reflect the curriculum, increase awareness of British culture, and foster discussion on personal, social and economic issues. The course is built to reflect the needs of the group and is flexible in order to respond to needs highlighted by subject teachers.

Most students will have about 2 hours of group EAL classes a week, usually when their peers are studying French or another foreign language. Extra classes can be arranged, timetable allowing, for those who need individual support.

Students who arrive with a very high level of English, who do not need EAL lessons, may also arrange an occasional individual class if they would like some support with a specific piece of coursework or skill, e.g. essay writing.

- **Supporting subject teachers**

We recognise that all teachers are teachers of academic English to some extent. To support our colleagues in this, subject teachers are provided with information on the linguistic capabilities of each EAL student. The EAL department encourages subject teachers to seek advice from us where required on how best to support the EAL students in their class, for example by providing key word banks, by analysing the language of their subject and integrating it into their lessons, or by providing and analysing model texts. We offer suggestions about relevant methods of differentiation, respond to concerns and offer advice wherever and whenever needed.

- **Preparing students for external examinations: CIE IGCSE in English as a Second Language in Y10-11, and IELTS in the Sixth form.**

The IGCSE E2L tests vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension, note-making, summarising, speaking and non-fiction text writing. Many EAL students choose to take this subject instead of English First Language as it better fits their needs and offers a greater chance of success. It is considered a good stepping stone for IELTS.

IELTS is a test of academic language skills that international students take to show that they have the level of English required by their chosen degree courses.

Many of our international students apply to universities in the UK. In order to satisfy entry requirements, they need to attain a certain grade in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exam, showing that they have sufficient academic English language skills. The skills learned (especially careful reading, academic vocabulary and essay writing) complement their A Level studies. We recommend students prepare for the exam during the autumn and spring terms, take a mock exam in school, and sit the exam only when they are confident of getting the desired grade.

IELTS testing takes place monthly at Exeter College and currently costs £165. The school can register students for the exam in Exeter on their behalf and the cost is added to the bill.

In certain cases, if they are applying to a university not listed as a Tier 4 sponsor, students may need to take the IELTS for UKVI test, which costs around £200. There is no difference in the test itself, only in the administration. The nearest IELTS UKVI centres are in London, Cardiff and Bournemouth.

Topics in both IGCSE and especially IELTS are generally academic in nature.

EAL Clinic

Students may choose EAL Clinic as an activity once a week. This is an opportunity to ask the EAL teacher for help with any work they are having trouble with, or simply to catch up on any work that is taking longer to complete due to the language barrier.