



ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

Rationale

At Oporto British School (OBS), we celebrate the fact that many of our children speak more than one language and acknowledge their ability to use a variety of community languages.

English is the language of instruction at OBS. The main purpose of the EAL (English as an additional language) programme at OBS is to support and build the social and academic language that is needed within our IBDP curriculum. Students receive specifically designed instruction that is focused on developing the four language domains: speaking, writing, listening and reading.

We believe that learning and language are interconnected and that learning best takes place in authentic contexts within a caring environment. We strive to create a learning environment that fosters language development through oral engagements, vocabulary expansion and a focus on reading and writing skills. By integrating learning and language across the curriculum, we ensure that students develop lifelong skills with strong linguistic foundations.

This policy outlines the procedures at OBS for developing English language proficiency in pupils for whom English is not the home/first language.

Policy Aims:

The aim of this policy is to help ensure that we meet the full range of needs of those children who are learning English as an additional language. This is in line with the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001.

The principal aims of the EAL programme are to meet the needs of all EAL learners as they progress through the key learning stages of the school and to foster thinking about EAL development across the curriculum in the OBS context.

Other specific **aims of the EAL** programme are:

- To meet the needs of pupils who have EAL by co-ordinating our planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, resources and strategies;
- To build pupils' self-confidence in using English for academic and social purposes;
- To develop linguistic competence to ensure that EAL pupils can achieve the best possible level of academic achievement;
- To nurture positive attitudes towards awareness of multiculturalism through EAL learning;
- To enhance thinking skills across the curriculum through the English language medium.

Key Principles of additional language acquisition:

In the report "Educational Outcomes of Children with English as an Additional Language", Jo Hutchinson defines the term EAL (English as an additional language) as "children who speak another language at home other than English. Children with EAL have widely varying levels of English proficiency; some have no English, and some are fluent multilingual English-speakers".

English language acquisition is a long-term process whose successful foundations are mainly established in the early years of primary education. Therefore, there is a need for EAL-informed teaching in these formative years. In certain circumstances, however, EAL support *may* be necessary throughout a pupil's entire school life.

According to the Primary National Strategy document “Supporting children learning English as an additional language”, the 3 key principles about learning English as an additional language include:

1. Supporting continued development of first language and promoting the use of first language for learning enables children to access learning opportunities within the EYFS and beyond through their full language repertoire.
2. Cognitive challenge can and should be kept appropriately high through the provision of linguistic and contextual support.
3. Language acquisition goes hand in hand with cognitive and academic development, with an inclusive curriculum as the context.

In addition to the above, it is important to consider the internal and external factors that can influence or have an impact on the rate at which a pupil acquires English.

These factors are:

- **Age:** How old is a student when they start learning a foreign language?
- **Personality:** Is the student introverted or extroverted?
- **Motivation:** Is the child being forced to learn, or do they want to learn the language?
- **Prior EAL learning experiences:** Is the language they’re learning their first foreign language?
- **Support at Home:** Is another language spoken at the child’s home? What’s their exposure level to different languages?
- **Teaching Strategies:** How is the language taught?
- **Comprehensible Input:** How attainable does the language feel to the student?
- **Comfort in their Country of Residence:** How happy are students in the country where they are studying a language?

Admission process

In order to determine a pupil’s need for support from the EAL programme, his/her English language ability is evaluated during the admission process as outlined below:

- Interviews conducted by the Head of Learning Development and Head of Section.
- Assessment of literacy level obtained from writing samples, spelling tasks and reading comprehensions. In addition to current testing, Literacy and Numeracy, it is proposed that a standardised placement test concentrating solely on EAL communicative competence be administered.
- Records/Reports from pupil’s previous school.
- Head of Learning Development department reports back to Head of Section with recommendations for EAL support.



EAL Support

Information gathered during the admission process will guide EAL support teachers on the type of EAL programme that can be offered to help pupils meet the challenges of a curriculum delivered in English. Flexible timetabling is structured according to the needs of individuals. The need for EAL classes will be determined at the Admissions stage.

We try to cater for individual needs, learning styles and cultural backgrounds. Tuition is in small groups and, when necessary, one-to-one support lessons.

After consultation with the mainstream class teacher, Learning Development Coordinator, EAL pupils are supported in one (or a combination) of the following modes for a period deemed appropriate for supporting English language development:

- In-class: EAL support teacher/teaching assistant provides in class support to individuals/small groups to accomplish tasks set in a lesson (primary and secondary).
- Withdrawal from the literacy lesson in primary: EAL support teacher/teaching assistant withdraws small groups of newly arrived students or EAL students with basic knowledge of English during their literacy session to help them with English. The number of hours of support given depends on the level of English.
- Withdrawal from MFL in secondary: individuals/small groups given English language lessons using EAL pedagogy (this would normally be during language lesson times; pupils who are particularly weak in English arrange to drop a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) in order to take additional EAL instead. This is discussed and agreed with the Head of the Department, Academic Coordinator and Head of Section).
- Withdrawal from MFL & an additional subject in secondary: occasionally, and under exceptional circumstances, pupils may also drop an option subject in order to receive extra EAL; this is subject to discussion with the Head of the Department, Academic Coordinator and Head of Section).

In addition to these EAL support interventions, specialist EAL support teachers can contribute to English language development in other ways such as:

- Advising and supporting class teachers in selecting and adapting resources to address the needs of EAL pupils;
- Informing teachers about second language learning theories and methodology; (INSET, drop in clinics and 1:1 teacher-EAL specialist discussion);
- Informing parents/caregivers on ways to enrich their child's English language learning outside the OBS environment;
- Sharing profiles of newly arrived students with staff.

Strategies for developing EAL proficiency

Strategies for developing EAL proficiency are shared with staff during CPD days and/or training sessions. They are also stored in the shared drive.

Some of these strategies include:

- Providing opportunities for pupils to practise authentic language in a variety of contexts so as to gain insights into how English operates as a linguistic system;
- A balanced focus on receptive (reading, listening, viewing) and productive (speaking, writing) skills in English;

- Exposing pupils to a level of language that is comprehensible but higher than the level of language that a pupil can produce (Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development);
- Providing opportunities for pupils to draw on their knowledge of their home language to talk about and reflect on their English language learning;
- Collaborating with teachers of languages other than English (LOTE) to focus on linguistic features that could be explored in common during joint language projects.
- Integrating ICT with EAL learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress of EAL pupils in the programme is monitored through discussions held on a regular basis with the Learning Development Coordinator and EAL teachers and TLAs. Feedback is provided by interim reports supplied to parents and teachers each half-term. There is also a referral system for class teachers in both Primary and Secondary Sections to request support for pupils who are experiencing delays/difficulties in their English language development.

Other monitoring and evaluation tools include:

- Formative and summative evaluation, including Cambridge Primary and Secondary EAL progress tests;
- Availability of records on Staff-shared;
- Feedback from class teachers on EAL pupils' performance in homework tasks and tests;
- Use of individualised, graded reading schemes which incorporate wide-ranging English language skills;
- Consultation with the school's Educational Psychologist in the case of socio-emotional issues impeding EAL development (the Affective Barrier).

Pastoral Care

The Learning Development Department has a special interest in the pastoral care of all pupils whose first language is a language other than English and aims to help them to settle smoothly within the School.

The EAL Department can often provide an important source of information for staff, and an important means of communication between home and School, to ensure the welfare of pupils on the Learning Development Register.

Review

In the first instance, the Head of the Learning Development Department is responsible for the monitoring and review of this Policy every 3 years. In consultation with the Heads of Section, recommendations will then be provided to the Headmaster.

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