

Language Policy - The Stephen Perse Foundation

Glossary

EAL	English as an Additional Language
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
MLA	Modern Language Association
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Guiding principles

The school's language policy flows from our curriculum model. We believe that language is central to learning, and therefore all teachers are in practice language teachers. Whilst English is the language of instruction in our school, we value the presence in our school community of a multiplicity of ethnic groups and a variety of cultural traditions, many of which are carried by language. We are committed to providing a diversity of language instruction through our modern foreign languages programme, and we aim to foster amongst our students both a global outlook and an awareness of the United Kingdom's culture, language and traditions. The modern foreign languages programme develops understanding and respect for other cultures whilst upholding fundamental British values.

Language learning facilitates the acquisition of higher order thinking skills and the development of multiple perspectives on life. Cognitive abilities learnt in one language can be applied to other languages acquired.

The Language Policy supports the shared responsibility of teachers, students and parents for students' language development. Teachers and students alike are encouraged to assume the responsibility to be language learners, and to encourage others in their language learning journey.

The Language Policy promotes lifelong learning. Developing language skills gives students the capacity to solve problems, think critically and act creatively. Language empowers students to understand, interpret and respond to ideas, attitudes and feelings. Information literacy and technology also provide a gateway to lifelong learning and a rich range of language learning opportunities.

Goals of this Language Policy

This Language Policy is a working document developed by teaching and administrative staff at our Foundation. The Policy is consistent with the stipulated principles and practices of the IB. This document outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals and defines the programme designed to help our students attain these goals. This Policy provides an overview and guiding principles for

language learning which should permeate the entire school curriculum. We ask our staff and community to commit to this Language Policy so as to help the School achieve its educational aims.

We strive to address the particular challenges of those students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue by providing an integrated, well-implemented English as an Additional Language (EAL) approach in all school sections. We endeavour to integrate students' cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum.

Language profile of our school

The majority of our students, parents and staff speak English as a mother tongue. However, our research indicates that over 30 other mother tongues are spoken by our students at home, and many hold passports from other countries in addition to their UK citizenship. All of our administrative and teaching staff speak English and several are fluent in at least one other language.

Teachers' responsibilities and professional development

Our school recognises that all teachers are also language teachers who have the responsibility to facilitate language acquisition and promote communication skills through their teaching.

As it is an expectation for all teachers to be language teachers, we consider professional development opportunities based on integrated language instruction within our training provision for staff.

In the Senior School and Sixth Form the EAL Support Tutor teaches another subject other than EAL. The EAL Support Teacher is always on hand to support teachers of other subjects in the use of differentiation and language acquisition strategies, and to ensure that subject teachers receive the necessary support and professional development for integrating language acquisition strategies on a regular basis. The EAL Support Teacher provides practical ideas for developing the language skills of all students throughout the different subject areas.

English as an Additional Language

EAL students are classified according to the A-E rankings prescribed by the census requirements 2016 (see Appendix 1).

The number of students within the Foundation for whom speaking English as an Additional Language presents a barrier to access to the curriculum is very small. The needs of such students are usually identified as part of the admissions and selection process. In some cases, it is appropriate to recommend a course of intensive EAL tuition prior to enrolment.

For the 3-11 schools within the Foundation, pupils requiring additional language support will be identified in discussion with parents during the admissions process or through the class teacher's observations once the pupils have joined the School. When a need has been identified, a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be drawn up in collaboration with teachers, parents and the pupil. The PEP

will focus on those areas of need presenting barriers to the pupil's learning. The Inclusion Specialist will coordinate the delivery and evaluation of the plan as appropriate.

In the Senior School and Sixth Form College, the EAL Support Tutor is responsible for assessing the language needs of students joining the Foundation and he or she will liaise with students, teaching staff and parents to establish whether a student is at a risk of underachieving as a result of EAL. If a particular need is identified, the EAL Support Tutor will work closely with the student, providing individual or small-group support, setting targets and liaising with teaching staff to ensure that the curriculum can be accessed. Where appropriate, the EAL Support Tutor will also advise on access arrangements in public examinations. EAL support can be discontinued when the EAL Support Tutor is satisfied that the student is no longer at risk of underachieving in his or her academic programme.

Support for EAL students and mother tongue learners 3-11

Pupils beginning their academic journeys with us who are regularly exposed to languages other than English, or are considered bilingual, are carefully monitored. Information is shared with the teachers of those pupils to ensure that any additional needs are identified early and additional strategies are put into place where appropriate. Young learners are not always able to explain what their language experiences are so liaising between school and home is vital. We recognise the importance of providing opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.

As all teachers in the Foundation are language teachers, we regularly review the practices which support good language development. This requires teachers to encourage use of and confidence in home languages. Value is clearly given to the use of a range of languages via whole school approaches such as assemblies, language days, cultural trips and visitors into school. An ethos of respect towards all languages as well as enjoyment in their rich cultural usage is explicitly fostered.

In addition to this language development is promoted through the use of adult modelling, talk partners, talk frames and the general expectation that pupils respond in full sentences. It is acknowledged that a child's conversational fluency may mask gaps in academic language proficiency. Strategies to support this may include pre-teaching of key vocabulary, multilingual displays, subject or situational word banks, language games played as whole class and in small groups. Technology plays a large part in enabling young learners to record their ideas orally and engaging confidently with the whole curriculum.

All opportunities to encourage pupils to use home languages and English accurately, with flair and confidence are actively sought.

Support for EAL students and mother tongue learners 11-18

Language A

In the Senior School, all students study English Language and English Literature. In the Sixth Form College, all International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) students are required to study a language A. This is normally English Literature. Language A provision in languages other than English is available as a school supported self study language. We regularly review our language provision

and we are open to the possibility of offering other language A subjects as taught courses in the future, subject to demand and staff availability. The inclusion of a second Language A subject in the IB would lead to the awarding of a bilingual diploma.

Mother tongue support

Developing a student's mother tongue can accelerate the rate of his/her English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, increase self-esteem, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness. We support mother tongues by encouraging and facilitating participation in projects like the Juvenes Translatores translation competition, the Mother Tongue Other Tongue multilingual poetry competition, and the Stephen Spender Prize for Poetry in Translation. In Year 12 (summer term), the Modern Language Department's International Newsdays allows mother tongue speakers to showcase their language skills by researching and writing articles for a multilingual newspaper. Mother-tongue students also help teachers in the Modern Languages Department deliver Outreach sessions to local primary schools, provide taster sessions for non-native learners of the language, and develop materials for academic lessons in that language using iTunes-U or other digital platforms. Cinema and plays in a foreign language can feature as part of the school's Enrichment provision and some books in both the Senior School and sixth form libraries are available in other languages for native speakers. Students from our school have been supported by the Modern Languages Department in their preparation and entry for public examinations in languages such as GCSE Polish, GCSE Modern Greek, and IGCSE Portuguese. The Modern Languages Department is also proactive in facilitating link-ups between mother tongue students for the purposes of academic mentoring or pastoral buddying. Where possible we offer language clubs for heritage learners to develop their language. There is a modest selection of books in different languages in the libraries for them to extend their exposure.

Language B

Studying a modern language is a requirement for all students in Years 7-11 at the Senior School. French and Spanish are offered in Years 7&8, German, Russian and Mandarin Chinese are offered from Year 9. In the IBDP, language B Higher Level and Standard Level are offered in French, German, Spanish and Russian. Italian is also offered as a language B *ab initio* and Mandarin Chinese will be introduced post-16 from September 2018. Japanese is available as an extracurricular BALFA and GCSE. English is not offered as a Language B subject.

Students are expected to have a good existing knowledge or exposure to the target language before being accepted onto the IBDP Language B course. We gauge a student's linguistic ability by means of written tests conducted as part of the admissions process. Even though there is in effect an entrance requirement for Language B, classes nevertheless consist of mixed ability levels and teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the various language acquisition levels in each class.

Students with minimal previous exposure to the language can study Italian *ab initio* SL.

The choice of Language A or Language B for bilingual IB students is taken on a case by case basis depending on the length of time and how recently a student has been educated in a language other than English. This is discussed with the specific language teacher, Head of IB and Head of Sixth Form. It would not be appropriate for a bilingual student to study one of their languages as Language B as this is described by the IB as an 'acquired language'. Language A provision in languages other than English is available as a school-supported self-study language.

Global Outlook

Year 8 students at our school follow a discrete course in Global Outlook, which features a module on global languages, and aims to highlight the desirability of students adopting a world perspective on their lives.

Theory of Knowledge

Languages are included as one of the eight ways of knowing within the Theory of Knowledge course taught to all year 12 students. The use of language within and between cultures is explored across the different areas of knowledge. The inclusion of EAL students within the teaching groups brings a valued different perspective to these lessons.

Support for language learning

When a student has been identified with language difficulties which do not arise because English is an additional language, intervention and support are provided in line with the School's policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Parental involvement

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and provide valuable support for language learning. The school uses multiple methods to communicate to parents the critical importance of maintaining academic proficiency in the mother tongue. Parents sometimes volunteer to run language taster sessions, for example in Portuguese, attend our evening 'Inspire Me!' events which might have a linguistic theme e.g. Crime & Linguistics, or give talks on cultural phenomena and the role languages have played in their lives and careers

Languages in the local community

The Modern Languages Department sends teachers and students to local primary schools to conduct language sessions as part of the school's Outreach programme. Parents of pupils in the Foundation

ages 3-11 can seek guidance from the Inclusion Specialist to locate local language schools and groups to support home languages and enable them to develop proficiently.

How this policy will be disseminated

The Language Policy will be introduced to our school's community through multiple pathways including staff meetings and Curriculum Leaders' meetings. The policy will also be featured on our public website. New staff will be familiarised with the document during orientation.

Review of this policy

The Language Policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school development plan. The Senior Leadership Team will review the implementation of the policy in classrooms and throughout the school on a regular basis.

References

- "Learning in a language other than a mother tongue in IB programmes"
- "Developing a school language policy" in Towards a continuum of international education, pp. 25–7
- "Language options and language support" in The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice, p. 22
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy
- Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes
- Guidance for the support of mother tongue in the Diploma Programme.
- Learning stories – A learning story about how a school's language policy supports multilingualism in a culturally diverse community
- Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS)

Reviewed: December 2016

Appendix 1:**A New to English**

The pupil may:

- Use first language for learning and other purposes
- Remain completely silent in the classroom
- Be copying/repeating some words or phrases
- Understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English

Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

B Early Acquisition

The pupil may:

- Follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support
- Begin to use spoken English for social purposes
- Understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support
- Have developed some skills in reading and writing
- Have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary

Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access curriculum.

C Developing Competence

The pupil may:

- Participate in learning activities with increasing independence
- Be able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent
- Be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English
- Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing.

Requires ongoing EAL support to access curriculum fully.

D Competent

Oral English developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum

Can read and understand a wide variety of texts

Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure

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

Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

E Fluent

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

Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

N Not yet assessed