

EAL

(ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)



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Responsible person: Deputy Head (Academic)
References: Learning Development Department Handbook (3b)
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) Policy (3b)
Policy number: 3b

Background

As a boarding school, St John's has welcomed overseas pupils in the past, including those for whom English is an Additional Language. Despite the decline in demand for places from overseas, the culture of including EAL pupils is well-established. Any pupils for whom English is an Additional Language should benefit from the provision that we offer.

Aims

The EAL support at St John's aims to:

- equip EAL pupils to access as much of the academic curriculum as possible and to make the most of the opportunities available to them at St John's as a whole.
- ease pupils' integration and inclusion into the St John's community whilst promoting a respect for and interest in their own cultural background.
- respond to individual needs for support with both spoken and written English.
- promote the belief that languages are skills for life, not merely a means to an academic end.
- help pupils gain access to Higher Education via courses by helping them to prepare to pass examinations in which they demonstrate their English ability, such as IELTS and TOEFL.

Identification

Most pupils are identified on entrance to the School by their parents/carers or their previous school. Teachers and tutors are expected to identify any pupils who may not have been noted in the admissions process and who would benefit from the School's EAL support. In such cases, teachers and/or the tutor would inform the Deputy Head (Academic) who would liaise with EAL teachers and the Learning Development Department.

Ability grouping

Where possible, the Learning Development Department aims to place pupils requiring support in groups of similar ability which may mean offering two separate sessions or individual lessons. Quality of provision takes priority over quantity of lessons.

Admissions

Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language will be asked to take the online Oxford Placement Test alongside tests in other subjects, and when possible, to have an interview to help ascertain their suitability for School support and the type of support they need.

St John's recognises that in admitting pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, we have a responsibility to offer guidance and support to help pupils in their daily lives as they integrate into the School.

Curriculum for EAL pupils

Lower Third, Upper Third and Fourth Form

The Oxford Placement Test, which pupils may take as part of the admissions procedure, provides an indication of their English ability and they will possibly undergo further testing. They will follow the same curriculum as the rest of the year group in order to facilitate integration and provide them with the same curriculum and academic opportunities as their peers.

Should a pupil require significant support with their English then EAL lessons will be timetable in place of one of their academic subjects. The choice of subject will depend on the individual and what will best suit their academic profile. This will be in line with the Alternative Curriculum arrangements noted in the Curriculum Policy.

The support during these EAL classes will include:

- Working through a course book appropriate to their level.
- Focusing on language for a specific academic purpose, e.g., how to write up a science experiment.
- Addressing grammatical difficulties as they arise.
- Dealing with linguistic/cultural issues as they arise, in close cooperation with house staff, and pre-empting those that arise on a regular basis.
- Responding to requests for help in specific areas, from the pupils or staff.

Lower and Upper Fifth

In the Lower Fifth, it is expected that EAL pupils will continue with the same core subjects as their peers.

If it is considered necessary for them to have continued, significant support in EAL, this may be instead of one of their option choices and it should be discussed in conjunction with their tutor and the Deputy Head (Academic), who have oversight of their (I)GCSE subject profile, and in line with the Alternative Curriculum arrangements.

If a pupil is more suited to the IGCSE in English as a Foreign Language, it is unlikely that they will also take English (Language) at IGCSE level alongside their peers, in which case this should be the subject that is dropped from their timetable in favour of EAL classes. It may also be that they wish to take a (I)GCSE (if available) in their own language to either supplement or replace their study of a modern foreign language.

It may, therefore, be preferable to find time outside the curriculum for any of the above and this should be considered by the tutor, EAL teacher and Assistant Head (Co-curricular) to ensure that the pupil still has access to and is include in the full range of extra-curricular activities alongside their peers. In the Fifth Form, EAL classes continue the support detailed for the Fourth Form.

Sixth Form

EAL pupils in the Sixth Form will present with a wide range of abilities and needs. The most common focus is on achieving a grade in the IELTS exam, but there are other forms of support they may also require.

Provision is as follows:

- IELTS provision is tailored to individual need, rather than following a set curriculum. Teaching tends to focus on the examination via skills, rather than topics, enabling students to concentrate on improving in their areas of weakness whilst also refreshing their other skills.
- TOEFL provision is provided in response to the needs of pupils who intend to attend higher education in the United States or their home countries, where the IELTS qualification is less well-known. This exam requires the acquisition of numerous additional skills, such as efficient note-taking and summarising.

- EAL pupils work on their Personal Statements and university applications with the support of an EAL teacher. Any final decisions on content are the responsibility of the pupil in conjunction with pastoral staff and the UCAS team. An EAL teacher is also well placed to assist pupils with the more basic parts of the online application which can prove challenging to EAL students and the School recognises that parents/carers who have not been through the British education system may require more support in the UCAS process.
- Support is provided during EAL lessons to help students to access their other subjects.

The timetabling of EAL classes at Sixth Form is dependent on the availability of individual pupils and the level of their need.

(This policy also appears as Appendix K in the Learning Development Department Handbook)