

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) Policy



St John's School
LEATHERHEAD

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Background

As a boarding school, St John's has welcomed overseas pupils in the past, including those for whom English is an Additional Language. However, given the decline in demand for places from overseas, the current requirement for this provision is now almost non-existent.

Nonetheless, we believe that any pupils from the local area (or in the rare case, those who come from further afield for whatever reason) for whom English is an Additional Language should benefit from the provision that we offer and this policy outlines the provision we aim to provide in such cases. We also are aware that our Foundationer Programme could present pupils who require this provision.

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 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 or their previous school. In rare cases, we have suspected that parents have not put details of EAL needs on entrance material for fear that it may inadvertently affect the application process, (even once the offers have been made). It is

therefore important that teachers and tutors remain vigilant in lessons and when marking work so that those who would benefit from extra support with English because it is not their native language are highlighted. In such cases, teachers and/or the tutor would inform the Deputy Head (Academic) who would liaise with EAL teachers and the SEND department.

Ability grouping

Where possible, we aim to place pupils 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 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 general guidance and support to help pupils in their daily lives as they integrate into the School. Common issues may include:

- what is culturally appropriate in England, e.g. levels of politeness expected around the school
- teachers' expectations, e.g., teachers are happy to be asked questions at St John's, while this may not be the case in their home country
- personal issues particular to individual pupils. Whenever possible, after hearing their concerns, these will be passed on to the appropriate house staff.

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 initial appreciation of their English ability and they will possibly undergo further testing in order to provide a reliable and up-to-date guide as to their current level of English. They will follow the same curriculum as the rest of the year group in order to facilitate integration and provide them with the same, broad-based curriculum 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.

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 academic staff or the pupils themselves.

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 support in EAL, this may be 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 GCSE subject profile. If they do use one of their option choices for EAL support, it should be recognised that this is a two-year commitment and will result in having one GCSE less than their peers.

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 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 completes 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. Often their top priority is achieving an adequate 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. For example, a near-native speaker, in order to gain the optimum grade of which they are capable, may not need much practice in listening or reading, but will still need considerable guidance in understanding the requirements of the speaking and writing exams.
- 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 help of an EAL teacher. Any final decisions on content are the responsibility of the pupil in conjunction with their tutor and Housemaster/mistress, but initial assistance with grammar, choice of vocabulary and some guidance on appropriate content from an EAL teacher can facilitate this process. 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.

- Support is provided during EAL lessons to help students to achieve in their other subjects. This guidance is normally individual and may include examples such as the following:
 - helping pupils to understand the wordier questions in physics A level papers
 - helping pupils to describe experiments accurately
 - using essays written for other subjects to help target specific difficulties in grammar
 - providing vocabulary and guidance on how to write in the more 'emotional' style required for A level art.

Initiatives such as starting a vocabulary bank in the sciences and workshops in art prove beneficial in tackling academic problems.

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