

English as an Additional Language Policy



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Introduction

Harrow International School Shenzhen Qianhai (HIS SZ) supports all students to be able to fully access the taught curriculum and the wider life of the school. The purpose of the Language and Learning policy is to clearly articulate the school's approach to supporting English as an Additional Language (EAL) students as they develop the language skills necessary to succeed in all aspects of life at school.

Note this policy contextualises and aligns with 'English Language Acquisition: Policy, Purpose and Philosophy' (HS17) document.

Philosophy Statement

Supporting EAL students is the responsibility of every teacher at HIS SZ. All teachers develop the knowledge and resources to fully support EAL students. This is achieved through research-informed strategies and practices adapted to our specific context and nuanced for the distinct phases of the school. The School's practices are influenced by the Bell Foundation (bell-foundation.org), the Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model, amongst others. This model represents "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Coyle, 2010). At HIS SZ all teachers are encouraged to:

- Be aware of the language levels and needs of EAL students.
- Ensure that EAL students have the opportunity to overcome any barriers to learning through appropriate differentiation and ongoing support.
- Provide appropriate resources for the wide range of abilities amongst EAL students.
- Provide an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.
- Ensure that EAL students are able to become fluent and confident in all four skills in the English language.

Dimensions of Inclusion:

Inclusion is at the heart of ensuring all students reach their potential, no matter their English language capability. Evans et al. (2020) describe four dimensions of inclusivity. This research forms the basis for the guiding principles that have shaped and informed the school's approach to EAL support.

1. Academic Inclusion:

Academic inclusion ensures that plurilingual learners are fully included in curricular learning activities. This includes the interventions most commonly considered when reflecting on EAL support, such as pedagogical strategies, bilingual support, language proficiency assessment, etc.

2. Linguistic Inclusion:

Linguistic inclusion is how teachers ensure each student's entire linguistic repertoire is used to support learning and that all languages and language varieties a child uses are valued and not diminished. This might include translanguaging strategies and the use of home languages in school communications.

3. Social Inclusion:

Social inclusion is how schools ensure that plurilingual learners and their families feel accepted, comfortable, and safe and are able to build positive relationships with peers and staff.

4. Teachers' Inclusive Attitudes:

Teachers' inclusive attitudes refer to the importance of school staff viewing plurilingual learners as assets, valuing the benefits of multilingualism and viewing the challenges faced by language learners as variations of the challenges faced by all learners in their school careers.

The Distinction Between EAL and SEN

HIS SZ seeks to support all students with their specific learning needs, and the special educational needs of students are continuously monitored and supported. Where it is felt that a child has a special educational need (SEN), they should be referred to the learning support team. The learning support team will then investigate further, and, where appropriate, recommend strategies to teachers for supporting that child to achieve their full potential at school. However, a child must not be regarded as having a SEN because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is taught (SEN Code of Practice, DfES, 2001). As such, there is a clear distinction between the work done by the learning support team in supporting students with SEN and the EAL team in supporting students to develop their language.

Upper School

In order to support the above aims, the Upper School have put a number of systems in place:

- As part of the admissions process, all new students are assessed using CAT4 testing which provides a verbal standardized score. They also take a written test and have a face-to-face interview with a senior leader to assess all 4 components of English language.
- Students are assessed annually using the Global Scale of English test and the resulting data is used to inform decisions about pace, classroom management and curriculum design.
- EAL students are supported to fully access the curriculum according to their individual needs.

Upper School – Language for Learning Department

The Language for Learning Department serves two main purposes: i) to provide a progressive curriculum of taught lessons to develop English Language proficiency to students from year 7 to

year 11; and ii) to provide bespoke support to high needs individuals to support their accelerated acquisition of English language. The Language for Learning curriculum in KS3 is bespoke, in that the curriculum offer is graduated dependent on level of English language proficiency. Where student English language proficiency is below Harrow expected levels the student's curriculum will have a higher loading of Language for Learning lessons. This enables the School to better meet the needs of our students.

Upper School – The Distinction Between EAL and English

Language for Learning (LfL) focuses on the explicit teaching of functional and foundational language to help students improve all four English language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students develop both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), so as to become fully functional in both social and academic contexts in an English medium environment. LfL also supports other departments in their content language integrated learning (CLIL), but ultimate responsibility for subject literacy is with the departments themselves.

English is primarily concerned with the teaching of the British National Curriculum English courses from key stage 3 to key stage 5 which includes key stage 3 (year 7-9), the English Language and World Literature IGCSEs (year 10-11), and the A level English Literature course (year 12-13). There is natural overlap as both subjects are underpinned by strong reading and writing skills. As such, both subjects focus on building vocabulary, inference, and critical thinking in reading, and an awareness of genre, structure, and context in writing.

Lower School – Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Principles of Teaching and Learning

The Lower School has adopted The Bell Foundation's Five principles of EAL Pedagogy to ensure the most effective provision for learners using EAL. Schools that orient their support based on these principles will allow their learners to academically and emotionally thrive.

These principles are as follows:

- Multilingualism as an asset:

Learners' multilingualism – their ability to listen, speak, read and view, and/or write in one or more languages and/or scripts beyond English – is a valuable resource. Maintaining and further developing learners' home languages and other languages they know results in greater cognitive flexibility and stronger academic performance. Teachers and support staff should, where possible, deploy pedagogies which include the use of different languages. Learners using EAL should be encouraged to codeswitch and translate between any languages they know to support their subject content learning and the acquisition of academic English.

- High Expectations with appropriate support:

Having high expectations of learners using EAL while offering them the language support that they need is beneficial to their learning. Learners using EAL, like all learners, benefit from high expectations which inspire, motivate, and challenge them. Teachers and support staff should set goals that stretch and challenge learners of all backgrounds, abilities, and levels of proficiency in English, provide them with appropriately demanding activities, and expect their active engagement and concentration.

- Integrated focus on content and language:

Focusing on language while teaching subject content is crucial to the progress and attainment of learners using EAL. Cognitive and academic abilities of learners for whom English is an additional language are separate from their English language abilities. Although multilingual learners may be fully capable of the cognitive and academic demands of curricula in their home language(s), they may be unable to access fully a similar curriculum in English due to the English language barrier; alas, the curriculum does not wait.

The curriculum should be designed in such a way that all learners' needs can be met in the classroom, and any additional support required should be provided in the classroom. English language development should be integrated and embedded into the curriculum within language-rich mainstream classes. Any withdrawal of learners using EAL from a mainstream class should be for a specific purpose, time-limited and linked to the work of the mainstream class.

- Effective and holistic pupil assessment:

EAL assessment builds a broad picture of the learner, which enables teachers to plan appropriate and targeted support. Effective assessment provides teachers with the information needed to adapt teaching for EAL learners. Initial diagnostic assessment should gather linguistic and educational information, such as information about learners' language and literacy practices, prior education, and current cognitive skills. Initial assessment of learners' English proficiency should include listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing.

- Social Inclusion:

Including learners using EAL and their families in all aspects of school life improves their wellbeing and motivation for learning and is beneficial for the school.

Teaching and Learning in Practice:

The above principles inform and underpin the strategies used by Lower School staff to support EAL learners. To ensure continuity and consistency across the Lower School, staff will utilise the strategies included in The Bell Foundations Assessment Framework. These strategies include but are not limited to:

- Strategies for Supporting Access: Use visual aids, bilingual resources, and peer support to help EAL students access the curriculum.

- Teacher Expectations: High expectations for all students, with appropriate scaffolding to support EAL learners.
- Classroom Organization: Grouping strategies that promote language development and peer learning.
- Supporting Higher Achieving Learners: Provide challenging tasks and opportunities for advanced EAL learners to excel.
- Planning for Language Learning: Integrate language objectives into lesson planning.

Assessment

Identification and assessment are carried out to provide the most appropriate provision for each pupil.

We will assess children's use of language through:

- Information from the application form
- Information from parents/guardians
- Information from initial assessments and observations

Assessment is undertaken as a partnership between the EAL Team, class teacher, parents/guardians and pupil.

Termly assessment will be carried out to ensure that children are given challenging bespoke targets to accelerate progress are in place. Interventions are personalised, time-limited and are monitored to ensure accelerated progress.

Early Years

The children start EY with very little or no English.

- The children are assessed upon entry using the Harrow Grids.
- EY uses objective-led planning to track individual targets weekly.
- Termly assessment weeks track the EAL pupils progress, this data informs future targets and planning.
- Learning language through play - this needs to be learnt in a context, through practical meaningful experiences and interaction with others.
- Developing listening skills – the children begin to be able to understand much of what they hear, particularly where communication through gesture, sign, facial expression and using visual support is encouraged.
- Providing bilingual support from the Support Teachers, in particular to extend vocabulary and support children's developing understanding.

Continuing Professional Development

All teachers at HIS SZ are provided opportunities to improve their ability to effectively support EAL students.

- Insets and training sessions are held periodically in order to share best practice both within and outside of the school.
- All departments engage in ongoing training and cross-departmental research to promote effective teaching and learning strategies.
- The staff CPD online training library has a range of courses on supporting EAL students, CLIL, and Collaborative teaching.