English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The Abbey School, Reading

Reviewed by:	Deputy Head Senior School Head Junior School	September 2025
Ratified by:	Whole School Leadership Committee and Governor Audit	September 2025
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Policy

This policy document sets out the School's philosophy, aims, principles and strategies to ensure that students with English as an Additional Language fulfil their potential.

Aims & Principles

At The Abbey School, we aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment in which all students are equally valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Whilst we recognise that many of our students and their families speak more than one language and we acknowledge that multilingualism can be a strength, English is our common teaching and social language. However, this does not detract from us valuing and celebrating the additional languages spoken within our school community.

Although many students acquire the ability to communicate in English on a day-to-day basis quite quickly, the level of language needed for academic study is much deeper and more detailed and can require continuing support for a number of years.

To achieve this The Abbey School aims to:

- Help parents to understand how to support their daughter at home.
- Identify additional needs as early as possible so that appropriate support is offered.
- Encourage a "whole school" approach to the provision of support of students with EAL.
- Ensure that teaching practices and materials support the needs of the EAL learner.
- Respect the range of languages that are spoken by our students and value their overall language development.

Once a student reaches Senior School, we will work in line with the International Baccalaureate's helpful document entitled 'Language Policy'. The process of developing and reviewing the policy has been collaborative and has resulted in a policy framework which is 'meaningful and workable', and which is focused on the 'complex language and learning-related needs' of The Abbey community, as well as on our 'particular socio-cultural circumstances'. The School's underlying philosophy reflects the importance and value of language in our learning community, and the EAL policy provides a clear framework within which all students can be supported as language learners, and in which 'all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication'.

Definition of EAL

Many students at The Abbey School speak two or more languages. EAL students may be:

- Newly arrived from a foreign country and school;
- Newly arrived from a foreign country and an English-speaking school;
- Born abroad but moved to Britain at some point earlier in childhood;
- Born in Britain but into a family whose spoken language is not English.

EAL in **our** context is defined as when a language other than English is predominantly spoken at home and this additional language impacts learning in some way.

Equal Opportunities

The Abbey School is an academically selective school and therefore there should be confidence that prospective students can cope with the content and pace of The Abbey School's curriculum. The school will monitor intake but will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of her native language. See the Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.

SEND and Exceptionally Able Pupils

Most EAL students needing additional support do not have a learning disability but catch up with their peers once they have adjusted to the English language. However, should Learning Support or Gifted and Talented needs be identified, EAL students have equal access to the school's provision.

Our Values and Vision for EAL in our Setting

Junior School

We consider each child's situation individually, depending upon the age that they join the school, noted on the Junior School EAL list. We tailor any EAL support to the needs and age of the child.

- All staff play a crucial role in modeling uses of language and an awareness of the range of languages spoken by the students with whom they work.
- Staff provide language enrichment activities and support building vocabulary. The language demands of learning tasks are considered across all curriculum areas.
- Additional visual support can be provided, e.g. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, demonstration, and use of gesture.
- Scaffolding may be used for language and learning, e.g. talk frames, writing frames.
- Where appropriate, students may receive short term 1:1 or small group interventions to focus on grammar, subject specific vocabulary and misconceptions in comprehension.

Senior School

Students on the EAL list who have reasonable English and who can follow lessons receive EAL lessons in school. These lessons are taught largely by a language teacher who studied English as a Foreign Language at university. Students are either taught individually or in small groups. When students get to the GCSE stage EAL support can take the form of extra lessons from specialist English teachers targeting more complex vocabulary and grammatical constructions.

Students with very good English receive some individual help from their English teacher (for example for coursework) or other subject teachers. There may be an additional charge for some of these services.

Once a student's English is very fluent, they will remain on the EAL List and the EAL Coordinator (Senior School), working closely with the SENDCo, will monitor progress but not actively intervene unless there is a cause to do so. The School recognises that as the level of challenge rises through the years an EAL student's ability to cope may also change.

In all cases, the suitability of the year group curriculum will be assessed and an individualised timetable created if appropriate. Some EAL students can opt for a reduced curriculum, for example taking fewer or no Modern Foreign Language options.

English Qualifications

Whenever possible and advisable, the School will endeavour to help Lower and Upper V (Year 10 and 11) EAL students to take at least one GCSE in English. If a student's English is at a basic level, the School may recommend alternative qualifications such as a lower-level Cambridge proficiency. For some students, it is more appropriate to concentrate on non-examination English as a preparation for future study.

Examinations

In public examinations, some EAL students are entitled to additional time and help. They are permitted to use a bilingual dictionary, which is to be supplied by the school and checked by staff prior to the examination.

Additional time (25%) is also allowed but only if:

- They have been in the country for less than two years;
- Neither parent is British born;
- They have not been educated in an English-speaking school;
- They need to use a dictionary extensively.

(See the latest JCQ regulations).

Additional information can be obtained from the Examinations Office.

Identification, Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

Junior School

EAL students are identified through communication with parents and initial entry assessments. This is recorded as part of our school's monitoring of support and intervention programmes. Dialogue with teaching staff and observations of students identify language specific barriers to learning, and strategies to support within the classroom.

Information on iSAMS is reviewed regularly to identify progress and where additional help from the Support of Learning Team may be beneficial.

Senior School

Students with EAL are identified during the school entrance process. Once identified as EAL, a place will be offered on the understanding that, if necessary, the parents agree to extra EAL support. Additional tutoring and help, before or after arrival, may be made a condition of entry to the school, to give the students the best opportunity of accessing the curriculum.

Once members of the school, EAL students are assessed with a verbal and written test and the appropriate level of support is determined. Where appropriate, the school will provide additional support to groups of or individual EAL students. Written reports detailing progress are included in the annual full written report for these students.

A list of EAL students, with information about the languages spoken and the level of support required, is maintained. The Whole SENDCo is available for consultation and will advise teachers on needs, strategies and, if applicable, materials which may be useful to support EAL students.