



English as an Additional Language Policy

Reviewed: November

2024 Next Review:

August 2026

Reviewed by: EAL Co-ordinator/Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress)

Introduction

Bedford Girls' School is an academically selective independent day school for girls aged 7-18. Our School is also multi-cultural and wishes for all of its students to have the same breadth of educational opportunities and experiences. Students who receive assistance with EAL are fully integrated into all aspects of life at School and will be part of a form group and follow an appropriate curriculum timetable. They will be encouraged to take part in co-curricular clubs, societies and activities so that they can be fully immersed into the culture and ethos of Bedford Girls' School. The School encourages all students to achieve their academic potential and wishes to support them in their transition into happy, resilient and successful adults.

Students with EAL come from a variety of countries and often have a range of English skills. We recognise the wealth of prior learning experiences they bring with them and believe this cultural diversity enriches the School environment and learning experiences of all students here at Bedford Girls' School. This supports the IB philosophy which promotes international mindedness at its core.

Identification

An EAL pupil is a pupil whose first language is not English. This encompasses students who are fully bilingual and all those at different stages of learning English. EAL students may be newly arrived from overseas, born overseas or born in the UK and living in a family where the home language is not English.

In our admissions process, EAL students are subject to the same admissions procedures as other students. Parents must alert us to any EAL information in the application form and in appropriate circumstances, allowances will be made regarding the admissions tests to allow those with EAL to show their full potential. We will then contact parents to ensure we address the level of support their daughter may require in the assessments.

Intervention

EAL students are supported in order to access the full curriculum. English is best learnt through the curriculum and EAL students are encouraged to develop their language skills, written, oral and aural, in lessons and outside the classroom.

A register, with a list of EAL students, is shared with all teachers so that they are aware of the possible language needs of students in their classroom or tutor group and consider appropriately differentiated teaching and learning strategies. Within the classroom environment, staff employ differentiation strategies to ensure that all students receive appropriate work and that all students receive the support they need to achieve their full potential.

Staff are given relevant and updated training concerning EAL teaching strategies and information regarding students who have been identified as EAL learners is made available by the EAL Co-ordinator. All students at Bedford Girls' School have a range of abilities and talents; it is vital that this is recognised by our community and that all staff help the students to develop their strengths. Some EAL students who require more targeted support to access the language demands of the curriculum receive group or one to one support with the EAL Co-ordinator.

Tracking and Monitoring

The Head, Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) and Heads of Year meet at the time of Progress Reviews and internal examination sessions in January and June. In the meetings, the progress of every girl is tracked. Information is held centrally by the Data Manager and is shared with the EAL Co-ordinator to ensure that appropriate measures are put into place for EAL students.

Following the internal mock and end of year examinations, the EAL Co-ordinator and the Assistant Head review the academic progress of EAL students. The Assistant Head and EAL Co-ordinator meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual students. The EAL Co-ordinator, along with Heads of Year and Form Tutors, will request updates from teaching staff about the work and progress of individual students and will liaise with parents as appropriate. It is also expected that teaching staff maintain regular dialogue with the Co-ordinator of EAL over any issues surrounding an EAL pupil in their charge.

Communication with Parents

Parents receive regular communication through Progress Reviews, Reports, internal examination results sheets and annual Parents' Evenings. The EAL Co-ordinator will provide email updates to parents on the progress an individual EAL pupil is making in support lessons termly.

The EAL Co-ordinator will complete an initial evaluation of the best approaches to communication after assessment of the home context. If necessary and possible, the School will arrange for a translator (from the MFL department or another bilingual member of staff) to communicate with parents. Parents of EAL students may bring along a family member during face-to-face meetings, such as an older sibling, to help provide translations of the discussions held.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time, should they have specific questions or concerns. The form staff, subject staff, Heads of Years, EAL Co-ordinator, Deputy Head or Headmistress may be the point of contact, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the concern. Parental contact will be appropriately redirected if necessary. Confidentiality will be respected, and, as always, the welfare of the individual girl will be the focus of any action taken.

The EAL Co-ordinator meets with the parents and students they oversee in order to provide feedback from support sessions. They regularly communicate with parents of students receiving EAL support, informing them of the support provided at BGS and on the individual progress of their daughter when the sessions are completed.

The Role of the EAL Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator of English as an Additional Language works as a teacher in school. They have accumulated extensive experience of supporting children who speak English as an additional language or who are bi-lingual across the whole age range. They liaise with staff (Junior School, Senior School and the Senior Leadership Team), see students, and contacts representatives of outside agencies as required. In addition, they work closely with the Assistant Head (Assessment and Student Progress) so that arrangements for seeing students and alerting appropriate staff proceed smoothly. They screen students for specific language difficulties, documents her findings, notifies staff and communicates with parents.

They attend training courses/continues to update her professional knowledge/attends regular update meetings to ensure they is aware of changes to the ISI standards and DFE requirements in terms of EAL provision at BGS.

They put into place any strategies necessary to comply with the latest EAL framework legislation (quality of Education, cultural development, provision of Information) to remove any barriers to learning success. They also ensure that policy and practices are in line with ISO standards.

They liaise with the Examinations Manager and SENCO providing them with the evidence required to apply for access arrangements should this be required and advising how the needs of the pupil with EAL can reasonably be met within different assessment situations.

They liaise with Heads Of Department and the Junior School Deputy Head regarding the provision made for students with EAL needs in assessments relating to their subjects, including assessment tasks.

They work with appropriate outside agencies involved in supporting students with more complex needs to ensure that they can fully access the curriculum and works to remove any barriers to learning they might be facing. They co-ordinates the support for students with English as an Additional Language and manages the annual review process.

Support for Staff

In addition to ongoing liaison with the Co-ordinator of EAL, support is provided for staff as they address the particular learning needs of individual students, for example through 'Friday Briefing' staff training sessions.