City of London School English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

0. Review of Policy

0.1 This policy is reviewed annually (or more regularly as required) prior to approval by governors.

Policy last reviewed by:	Noeleen Murphy (Director of Studies)
Date last reviewed:	November 2025
Policy approved for Governors by:	Board of Governors
Date last reviewed:	3 December 2025

1. Introduction, and Aims and Objectives

1.1 English as an Additional Language (EAL) support may be available to pupils whose first language is not English. In practice, many EAL pupils at the School will neither need nor want language support, but for those that need support, individual and / or group lessons will be offered. The primary aim of such support is to improve the pupil's range and accuracy in English.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policy
- The Learning Support and Disability Policy

1.3 This policy has regard to Part 1 (Quality of education provided), Paragraph 2 (Curriculum) of the Independent School Standards Regulations.

2. English acquisition

2.1 In many schools, a simple 5-stage model (see below) of English acquisition is used to describe a pupil's capability in English. This is a 'best-fit' model and though it is not detailed enough to be effectively used for target-setting or formative assessment it does provide a simple and consistent model for use to make a general assessment.

All pupils at the School have passed entrance exams taken in English[1]. Pupils at the School are almost inevitably at stage C, D or E. However, a pupil may still require support to achieve his full potential.

[1] The School follows JCQ guidelines on the setting of these exams.

2.2 **The 5-stage model and see the 6 points also made in 3.3 which is a newer model. The 5 points are left in as they are also clear and useful.**

A. New to English

The pupil:

- May use his first language for learning and other purposes.
- May remain silent in the classroom.
- May copy / repeat some words and phrases.
- May understand some everyday English expressions but have minimal or no English literacy.
  Needs considerable support.

B. Early Acquisition

The pupil:

- May follow day-to-day social communication in English.
- May be beginning to use spoken English for social purposes.
- May understand simple instructions and be able to follow narrative accounts with visual support.
- May have developed some skills in reading and writing.
- May have become familiar with some subject-specific vocabulary.
- Still needs significant support.

C. Developing Competence

The pupil:

- May participate in learning activities with increasing independence.
- May be able to express himself orally in English but structural inaccuracies are still apparent.
- May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English.
- Requires ongoing support with literacy, particularly for understanding text and writing.
- Requires support to access the curriculum fully.

D. Competent

The pupil:

- Has oral English that is developing well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum.
- Is able to read and understand a wide variety of text.
- Has written English that may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure.
- Needs support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.

E. Fluent

The pupil:

- Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his first language.

Pupils at CLS have passed entrance exams taken in English (first language) and are therefore at the higher level of competence[2]. However, a pupil may still require support to achieve his full

[2] The School follows JCQ guidelines on the setting of these exams.

potential. City of London School uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to assess support needs (see below – EAL assessment).

3. EAL assessment

3.1 A referral for EAL support can take any one of three routes:

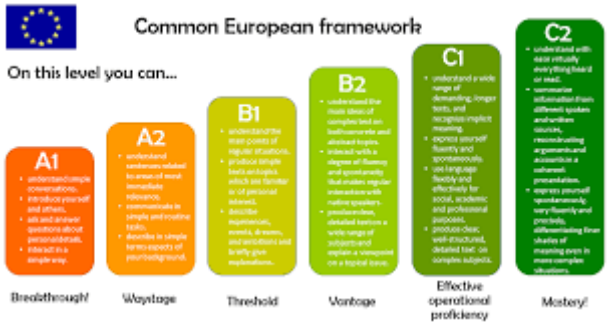
1. Pupils arrive at the School with a known EAL need and having received support at their previous school. This information is shared with the EAL co-ordinator by the Admissions team.
2. Parents, pupils, Form Tutors or subject teachers might refer a pupil to the EAL co-ordinator (see Appendix 1: EAL guidance for subject teachers).

3.2 Once a pupil has been referred for EAL support, examples of the pupil's work are sought from the subject teacher in English and / or exercise books for a range of subjects are examined. This is checked and further tests[3] are carried out.

3.3 Around one quarter of the pupils at the School reported speaking another language at home, either in addition to English, or in preference to English. Many of these pupils would classify themselves as bilingual. In 2025, 9 pupils at the School are currently receiving EAL support. Screening of first form takes place on 18th November 2025 (15 pupils on list for screening) so this number is likely to rise.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a system for grading language proficiency that uses six levels, A1 to C2:

- **A1**: Beginner
- **A2**: Elementary
- **B1**: Intermediate
- **B2**: Upper intermediate
- **C1**: Advanced
- **C2**: Proficient



The CEFR levels can be grouped into three broad categories: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User. The levels are defined by "can-do" descriptors. For example, at the A2 level, a learner can communicate in everyday situations, such as shopping, family, and employment. At the C2 level, a learner can understand complex texts, express themselves fluently, and use language for social, academic, and professional purposes.

[3] The School uses the Oxford Placement Test and teacher assessment..

The CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe to standardise language exam levels across different regions. Many language exams are aligned with the CEFR. City of London School uses online assessment testing based on the CEFR guidelines.

3.4 The support provided by the EAL teacher might be directed by the subject teacher in English (e.g. the teacher might report a problem with the correct use of adjectives / adverbs and this will be a topic for study in the EAL support lesson). From the Fourth Form upwards, lessons are individual and focused on preparation for IGCSE English Literature and GCSE English Language examinations with an emphasis on GCSE English Language.

3.5 Further guidance for subject teachers may be found in Appendix 1.

4. Information sharing

4.1 Information about the identities of EAL pupils is available in iSAMS and this information is also shared with the English department.

5. Resources

5.1 The resource bank for EAL support continues to be developed based on the specific needs of individual pupils. Please see the EAL co-ordinator for further information.

Appendix 1: EAL guidance for subject teachers

City of London School

EAL guidance for subject teachers

Guidance last updated by:	Susy Ralph (EAL Co-ordinator) and Kate Ireland
Date last updated:	November 2025

1.1 This guidance is general, by nature, and not all of it will be relevant for subject-specific teaching.

1.2 **Background to EAL at CLS**

EAL support (off-timetable lessons rather than in-lesson support) may be available to pupils whose first language is not English. In practice, many EAL pupils at the School will neither need nor want language support, but for those who need support individual and / or group lessons can be arranged.

Lower School pupils are taught by Kate Ireland in groups; Fourth to Sixth Form pupils individually where possible, supported by Susy Ralph.

The primary aim of such support is to improve the pupil's range and accuracy in English.

1.3 **EAL Referral**

Referral for EAL support can take any one of three routes:

1. Pupils arrive at the School with a known EAL need and having received support at their previous school.
2. Parents, Form Tutors or subject teachers refer a pupil to the EAL co-ordinator, or the pupil self-refers.

1.4 **Cultural Issues**

In addition to language problems, there may be cultural issues which staff need to be aware of when supporting pupils who speak a different mother tongue, issues that could hinder learning and which arise out of cultural rather than linguistic differences.

For example, it is generally accepted that pupils who have started their education in the Far East may have a strong dislike of making mistakes, especially orally. They will either think very carefully before saying anything or simply not speak in case they get it wrong. This can usually be overcome with patience, coaxing, praise for effort and sensitive handling of mistakes but it will take time.

Another cultural factor (not limited to Far Eastern cultures) can be an unwillingness to question a teacher as it is felt to be a mark of disrespect. This means that they may misunderstand something but not ask for clarification, and in answer to "do you understand?" reply "yes" even when they don't, as that seems to be the desired answer.

Once again, these pupils need to be reassured that the School's normal way of teaching is a two-way process and that discussion and asking questions is encouraged. Asking searching questions to check understanding is helpful.

It may also be difficult for parents – who may themselves not speak English fluently – to raise language problems with the School and they may not wish to 'flag' their sons as struggling.

1.5 **Tips for helping pupils with English in mainstream classes**

I include below all the tips I was given at the schools I visited during my sabbatical. Not all will be relevant to CLS pupils (or to your specific subject), and many of the tips may seem obvious to experienced teachers, but I would rather include too many pointers than too few!

- Simplify the language not the content. Where possible, pre-teach subject-specific vocabulary. Illustrate and label (in Science).
- Develop and maintain lesson routines, reference points, etc. Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instruction. Announce lesson topics, announce section topics, exemplify, summarise the lesson. Provide frequent summations of the salient points.
- Read aloud. It helps if pupils can hear the words as well as see them on the page.
- Wait longer for answers to your questions. Pupils may need time to process the language before they can think of the answer and then respond.
- Pupils may not be familiar with the concept of group-work or working cooperatively. You may need to teach them how to do this.
- Sit EAL pupils at the front so that you can see what they are taking down. It may help to check that they have written the details of homework correctly in their homework diaries.
- Try to avoid idiomatic / colloquial expressions, e.g. "You are not making any headway" or "have a go at it".
- Write instructions on the board – do not assume that verbal notices have been understood.
- If an instruction is not understood, re-phrase rather than repeat. Ask the pupil to repeat it back if you are not sure if they have understood.
- Keep a corner of the board for writing key topic-related vocabulary as it comes up. Encourage pupils to copy this into the back of their books under the appropriate topic heading for ease of reference.

1.6 **And finally …**

Please do see me if you have any concerns about pupils that you teach, and if you know that I am helping a pupil in your class and would like me to cover a particular topic or skill, let me know and I will see what I can do.