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## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

**Policy Custodian:** Deputy Head (Academic)

**Approving Body:** MTS Senior Leadership Team

**Approved:** February 2020

*(This policy does not apply to Merchant Taylors' Prep.)*

### Introduction

In common with many schools in the metropolitan areas, MTS is an ethnically diverse community. However, the overwhelming majority of the pupils at MTS are native or near-native speakers of English. School experience is that very few pupils require EAL provision: those pupils whose primary language is not English are generally already fluent bilingual speakers at entry. There is no evidence that any pupil has ever had less than the fullest access to the MTS curriculum and the few EAL pupils that have attended the school have generally been outstandingly able in terms of the academic profile of their year. Some evidence of this can be seen from the fact that, historically: no pupils take any major public examinations in any medium other than English, with the exceptions of foreign or classical languages; no parents have ever requested that their son be entered for equivalent EAL qualifications, or withdrawn from English Literature

All this being so, we have many pupils who are familiar with languages other than English. This covers a wide spectrum – from having an affinity with certain ceremonial languages to being fully bilingual. There are some pupils who have been admitted to MTS who have been in English-speaking environments for fewer than 4 years and have some EAL needs. Some have specific transition issues as they attain proficiency. For this reason, we treat the category of EAL flexibly and judge the need for appropriate provision on a case-by-case basis in developing the spoken and written English of these pupils.

### Policy

The school's entrance examinations means that all but a handful of pupils in the school are either entirely proficient or at least at upper-intermediate level. Attainment in English or English Literature is comparable with all other externally examined subjects and the English Department's results match or surpass those of other leading schools.

On those rare occasions where specific EAL support is deemed desirable for an individual pupil, the Head of Learning Support and the Deputy Head (Academic) liaise with parents to ensure that this is arranged expeditiously.

The delivery of EAL support rests within the Learning Support Department. The principal aim of this support is to give all students, who have a recognised EAL need, the ability with language and the confidence to deal with all of their studies, extra-curricular activities and social interactions while they are at Merchant Taylors' School.

The support aims to help pupils communicate effectively – both orally and in writing – in a language which is not their first language.

EAL provision is available, in principle, to all pupils whose first language is not English.

All teachers structure lessons so as to achieve the learning objectives for that lesson, rather than structure the lesson around tasks and materials graded according to linguistic difficulty.

It is understood that it is the responsibility of all teachers to play a lead role in assisting pupils in developing their English skills: written and spoken.

## **Practice**

During the Admissions process, if there is a possibility that a pupil has EAL needs (via information in references or the initial Registration Form) the Admissions Office will notify the Head of Learning Support and the Deputy Head (Academic). As part of the marking of the English entry examinations, the Head of English will note any scripts with errors that indicate a level below upper-intermediate and arrange a meeting with the Registrar to ensure that, if necessary, a list is compiled of such pupils. The Registrar will finalise that list with the Head of English and the Head of Learning Support (in case there are overlapping Learning Support needs) and the pupil's English teacher and Tutor will be informed.

During the first half-term of the pupil's education at MTS, the English teacher will conduct a preliminary evaluation of the pupil's level of English, as part of the general performance evaluation of pupils new to the School, and report to the Head of English who will liaise with the Head of Learning Support. All new pupils fill in a questionnaire on language employed at home to help identify the variety of additional languages, spoken and written, and this information centrally stored on the School's database and with the Learning Support Department.

On the rare occasions where separate provision is deemed necessary (discrete tasks, specific language drills, etc.) the Head of Learning Support and the Deputy Head (Academic) liaise with parents to ensure that a bespoke programme is put in place that meets precisely the pupil's individual needs. The nature of the response will depend upon the nature of the need, and will be decided upon a case by case basis. Lessons can be conducted either on an individual basis or in small groups.

All subject teachers will then be made aware of a pupil's individual needs. The English teacher will monitor the progress of pupils with residual EAL issues to ensure that they are making progress in any specific areas of weakness. In the GCSE years, pupils with particular needs in English proficiency are typically taught in two parallel, smaller groups to enable individual attention.

The school has always been aware that for some parents, English is not their first language and has always ensured communication enables them to be fully involved with the education of their son. Relatives with proficient English have always been welcome at Parents' Evenings and consultations. The school has never had a request from a parent for reports to be provided in any language other than English.

This EAL provision is very flexible. It aims to take into account the wide range of educational backgrounds of our pupils and their differing levels and abilities.

Deputy Head (Academic)