

Merchant Taylors' School



ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Policy Custodian: *Head of Learning Support & Deputy Head (Academic)*

Approving Body: *MTS Senior Leadership Team*

Approved: *June 2025*

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

Introduction

“Bilingualism and biliteracy are becoming the norm rather than the exception.” (Kormos 2017)

The school considers a pupil has English as an Additional Language if they have a first language which is something other than English, regardless of how proficient they become in English.

In common with many schools in the metropolitan area, MTS is an ethnically diverse community. However, the majority of the pupils at MTS have English as their first language and very few pupils require EAL provision as those with EAL are generally already fluent English speakers at entry.

Nevertheless, we have many pupils who are familiar with languages other than English. Some may have an affinity with ceremonial languages while others are advanced multilingual and some may have been in English-speaking environments for only a few years at admission. For this reason, we recognise that pupils with EAL are a heterogeneous population, requiring a flexible and sometimes bespoke approach to their support.

Policy

The school's competitive entrance examinations means that all but a handful of pupils in the school are fluent. 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.

EAL support is arranged by the Learning Support Department, who consult with other academic departments as needed. The principal aim of this support is to give all students, who have a recognised EAL need, support with their language development and the confidence to deal with all of their studies, extra-curricular activities and social interactions while they are at MTS.

The support aims to help pupils develop effective receptive and expressive communication in English – both orally and in writing. 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 through Quality First Teaching (QFT).

Practice

Identification primarily occurs through the use of the school home languages survey. Pupils may also be identified by teaching staff or during the Admissions process. In the latter case, the Admissions Office will notify the Head of Learning Support and the Deputy Head (Academic) so that appropriate action can be taken to support the pupil through the admissions process and initiate early planning of support should the pupil be offered and accept a place at the school.

Where a pupil with EAL is identified, the Learning Support department will conduct a review to determine their level of language development and what support or monitoring is most appropriate:

English Development Level	Support Provided
A – New to English	QFT supported by a pupil fact sheet, in class support and modified curriculum
B – Early Acquisition	QFT supported by a pupil fact sheet, in class support and modified curriculum
C – Developing competence	QFT supported by a pupil fact sheet and regular in class support
D - Competent	QFT supported by a pupil fact sheet and in class support where necessary
E – Fluent	QFT with tutor monitoring

In the overwhelming majority of cases pupils are found to be fluent (level E) and so will be supported by QFT and monitored by the tutor, who will review grades and reports and flag concerns should they arise. A very small number of pupils are found to be competent (level D). These pupils are supported by QFT informed by a pupil fact sheet and with the addition of in class support as and when necessary. Rarely a pupil is found to be at a developing competence (level C), early acquisition level (level B) or New to English. In the case of the latter two levels, further bespoke support is added through a modified curriculum, designed in liaison with the pupil's family.

All subject teachers have access to each pupil's EAL status, which is recorded in the school's management information system, along with pupil fact sheets where relevant. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils with EAL to ensure that they are making expected progress in their subject and EAL is one of the pupil categories reviewed as part of academic triage meetings.

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 child. Other 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.

Appendix - English Development Levels

A: New to English: May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

B: Early acquisition: May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can 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 a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.

C: Developing competence: May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.

D: Competent: Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

E: Fluent: Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as their first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

Source: English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language (DfE 2020)