



ST. CATHERINE'S BRITISH SCHOOL

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Whole School English as an Additional Language Policy

Mission Statement

St Catherine's British School fosters a love of learning within a diverse and inclusive environment. We respect and celebrate all cultures, promote excellence, and support every student in reaching their full potential as lifelong learners and responsible global citizens.

School Motto

At St Catherine's British School, our values – Curiosity, Care, Dedication and Integrity – permeate all areas of school life and are reflected by the school's motto: *Excellence and Happiness*.

Policy Statement and Rationale

This policy outlines the school's approach to supporting students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), ensuring equality of access to the curriculum and high standards of achievement. In this policy, students with English as an Additional Language will be referred to as EAL learners.

The policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and, where applicable, reflects the principles and safeguarding expectations contained within the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) and associated statutory guidance. As St Catherine's British School is an international school located in Greece, KCSIE is used as an important UK safeguarding benchmark alongside applicable Greek legislation, regulatory requirements and the school's own safeguarding and child-protection procedures.

The policy also reflects current evidence-informed practice from The Bell Foundation and supports the school's inclusive, inquiry-based and internationally minded approach through the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), the British National Curriculum and IB programmes where applicable.

We recognise that:

- EAL learners are not a homogenous group
- EAL alone is not a Special Educational Need (SEN)
- Students may be cognitively able but limited by English proficiency
- Multilingualism is a strength and asset

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1. Aims

The school aims to:

- Ensure all EAL learners have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Promote high expectations and achievement for all learners
- Support the development of both social and academic language
- Value students' home languages and sense of cultural identity
- Foster international-mindedness, in line with the International Primary Curriculum (IPC)
- Remove barriers to learning through inclusive practice

2. Definition

The majority of students at St Catherine's have English as an Additional Language and are referred to as EAL learners. These are students whose first or home language is other than English and who are in the process of learning and using English as an additional language through the curriculum and the broader life of the school. As part of the admissions process the level of a child's knowledge of English is informally assessed and children who are fully new to English from KS1 and up are advised to gain a basic level of English before they join the school so that they are able to communicate basic needs with staff either directly or via use of picture cues as a means of communication.

3. Identification

On admission, for students who are readily identified as EAL learners needing support, support is immediately offered. In class this is offered through high-quality first teaching (HQFT) by all teachers. Where additional support with English is required, the class teacher refers the student for assessment by the EAL support team to identify their needs and allocate appropriate provision by EAL specialists. In cases where students are identified as EAL learners at a later stage, provision is arranged by class teachers with the EAL team. In the Early Years (EYFS) and Lower School (LS) students are then assigned a language competence grade in accordance with The Bell Foundation level descriptors (Stages A–D), determined by the class teacher in conjunction with the EAL support team. These stages reflect whether a child is new to English, in the early acquisition phase, developing competence, or working at a competent level. In the Upper School (US) additional EAL support is arranged by referral, to meet the individual needs of each student.

4. Key Principles for Additional Language Acquisition

- EAL learners are not a homogenous group and do not necessarily have a common set of educational needs.
- When an EAL learner first joins an English-medium school, it is normal for them to experience a 'silent period' of up to six months, during which they acclimatise by watching and listening.
- It typically takes 1–2 years to become fluent in everyday spoken English, and 5–7 years to develop proficiency in formal, academic English.

- Children who are new to English benefit from being integrated into mainstream teaching most of the time, enabling them to develop oral fluency quickly, feel part of the school community, acquire language in context, and access their full curriculum entitlement.
- Supporting and developing students' competence in their first language alongside English is an important principle. Knowledge and skills developed in the first language transfer readily to additional languages. The school provides opportunities for this through assistive technology, language clubs, assemblies, International and MFL Days and language lessons as part of the curriculum.

5. EAL and Special Educational Needs (SEN)

We recognise that most EAL learners do not have SEN. However, should SEN be identified, students will have equal access to appropriate provision in line with the school's Inclusion and Access Policy.

We also recognise that there will be EAL learners who are working at a high level of attainment even though they may not yet be fully fluent in English whose needs are met through high-quality first teaching (HQFT).

6. Co-ordinating, Monitoring and Provision

The Role of the Learning Support Coordinator

The Learning Support Coordinator, in conjunction with EAL support staff, is responsible for:

- In LS supporting class teachers with teaching, learning, monitoring and tracking identified EAL students. In US by meeting with the Head of English to set targets for each year group.
- Ensuring that EAL learners are integrated into classes and providing additional support where needed, ensuring they can access to the curriculum
- Ongoing monitoring of progress of identified EAL learners through a range of channels from pupil voice surveys to student transition meetings and both pastoral and academic assessments
- Monitoring and maintaining an up-to-date register of EAL students in need of additional support
- Ensuring that appropriate intervention is provided when necessary
- Ensuring that members of the EAL support staff team are deployed effectively with access to suitable resources and materials

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher ensures that differentiated work, appropriate and adaptive classroom strategies, and direct support (where appropriate and manageable) are provided, suited to the child which reflects current level of academic ability. Students are supported in accessing the curriculum and are grouped flexibly in class, according to their level.

Classroom Strategies

We recognise that all EAL learners:

- Have a right to a full timetable with equal access to the curriculum (this may also include specialist EAL sessions)
- Should be grouped according to their intellectual and cognitive abilities, rather than their knowledge of English

We develop spoken and written English by:

- Ensuring that vocabulary work covers both technical vocabulary and the meaning of everyday words
- Displaying key vocabulary and using visual timetables where necessary
- Providing a range of reading materials that exemplify the different ways in which English is used
- Planning appropriate opportunities for talk and using oracy to support writing

We ensure access to the curriculum and to assessment by:

- Using texts and materials that are age-appropriate and matched to the learner's stage of learning
- Using assistive technology for example; text to speech tools and digital dictionaries.

EAL and Inclusion

At St Catherine's, we value each child as a unique individual and strive to meet the needs of all our students. All children follow the requirements of both the National Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). We provide learning opportunities that enable all students to make good progress and take all reasonable steps to meet the needs of students learning English as an Additional Language.

In the Lower School (Y1-Y6) we provide opportunities for all children to develop their language.

Language support within classrooms may involve supporting individual students or small groups by a range of adults. Where required, students may be withdrawn from lessons to receive targeted EAL intervention, either one-to-one or in small groups.

In the Foundation Stage, we support EAL students by:

- Building on their experience of acquiring language at home and in the wider community, so that this experience supports their developing use of English
- Providing a range of opportunities to engage in English speaking and listening activities, with both peers and adults

In the Upper School, all students benefit from a structured approach to developing their literacy skills. In Years 7, 8, and 9, students receive SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar) lessons on a fortnightly basis delivered by our EAL specialist. While these sessions are designed to strengthen core language skills for all learners, they also play a key role in supporting students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), ensuring an inclusive learning environment where language development is embedded across the cohort.

In Key Stage 4 and the IB, students identified as EAL are further supported through targeted 1:1 or small group interventions. These sessions focus on individual language needs, enabling students to build confidence, develop academic English, and access the wider curriculum more effectively.

By incorporating SPAG provision for all students, the school promotes inclusivity and avoids isolating EAL learners, allowing them to develop alongside their peers while still receiving the tailored support they require. This dual approach ensures that all students strengthen their language proficiency, while EAL learners benefit from both universal and specialised support.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The EAL support staff, in conjunction with the class teacher, will assess each student's level of English Language Acquisition and assign a band (A–D) at the start of the academic year for each EAL student:

- In EYFS, assessment is based on:
 - observations
 - child-initiated play
 - adult-led activities
 - conversations
 - story sessions
 - phonics
 - role play
 - interactions with peers
 - examples of drawing/writing
 - response to instructions.
- In Y1 and Y2, children identified as requiring EAL support will be assessed across reading, speaking and listening, and writing, using a preprepared EAL intervention basic skills language assessment.
- In Y3-Y6 children identified as requiring EAL support will be assessed using a more advanced preprepared EAL intervention skills language assessment and will cover the core areas of reading, speaking and listening and writing.
- In the Upper School, student progress is closely monitored through ongoing assessment and feedback provided by the English subject teacher. This information is then reviewed in collaboration with the EAL specialist, enabling informed decisions to be made regarding each student's next steps in EAL support.

The class teacher, supported by the EAL team will:

- Be responsible for keeping The Bell Foundation Level Descriptor assessment framework and tracker updated

Using a specialist spreadsheet, levels relating to the key areas of speaking, listening, writing and reading are recorded for each identified EAL learner. Class teachers highlight areas when they are confident, they have been achieved, at the end of each term. Following this termly assessment, teachers and the EAL support team set new targets in each key area, following the Bell assessment framework.

All individual targets should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound – and shared with parents and carers so that learning can be supported at home.

7. Resources used to support EAL students

Physical Resources

- Visual communication cards (indicating needs such as thirst, illness, or requiring materials)
- Twinkl noun, verb and adjective flashcards, word mats and matching activities
- Colourful Semantics resources
- Basic literacy and numeracy games
- EAL books

- Peer support, including a Buddy System
- In-school EAL LSA interventions

Digital Resources and Useful Websites

- Google Translate
- The Bell Foundation – Teaching Resources: www.bell-foundation.org.uk/teaching-resources/
- YouTube – including videos supporting basic phonics teaching
- BBC Bitesize – literacy and curriculum support
- British Council – Learn English Kids
- Twinkl
- Oxford Owl – Phonics Videos: www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/oxford-owl-videos/phonics-videos/
- Letters and Sounds Phase Games: www.letters-and-sound.com
- Education.com – Alphabet Games: www.education.com/games/alphabet/

8. Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

- Parents from different communities are invited to share knowledge about their culture or religious festivals and to support school events.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to read with, talk to, and discuss the school day and learning with their children in the home language.
- Parents and carers are informed of their child's targets so that they can provide support from home.
- When necessary staff can be provided to attend meetings with parents who request additional language support. The school also agrees that parents can bring their own interpreters to meetings if needed.

9. Staff Development

The school enables all staff to undertake professional development to ensure that provision for EAL students is appropriately delivered and co-ordinated.

The Head of Learning Support and EAL experts share good practice and strategies for EAL support during INSET and staff meetings.

10. Transition

When children join St Catherine's, the school liaises with previous providers and reviews school reports to ensure continuity of support. When students transition from the Lower to the Upper School, the Heads of Learning Support for both schools facilitate the transition in conjunction with the Head of Year 7 and Year 6 teachers. This includes sharing relevant information and arranging transition support appropriate to each child's needs, in collaboration with the EAL support team.

11. Wellbeing

St Catherine's aims to build and maintain a school environment and culture that supports the mental health and wellbeing of all students and staff, and that actively prevents discrimination, including bullying and harassment of any student or staff member regardless of their country of origin, as per our Anti-Bullying Policy available on our school website.

Exit Criteria

Clear benchmarks are established for when a student is ready to exit targeted EAL support. A student will generally be considered ready to leave targeted support when they have:

- Reached Stage D (Competent) across all four language domains in The Bell Foundation framework
- Demonstrated sustained progress in accessing the curriculum without additional language scaffolding
- Been reviewed by the class teacher and EAL Lead, with parental input where appropriate

Exit from targeted support does not mean that a student's EAL status is removed. Teachers continue to be aware of and responsive to the language needs of all EAL learners.

Date: October 2026

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