



EAL Guide

Academic Year 2020-2021

Introduction

The College has a number of pupils (around 60 each year) whose first language is not English and who arrive in London with little previous experience of education in the UK or Europe. The majority of these pupils enter Dulwich in Year 12, but there are also some boys who enter in Years 7 to 10. Our aim is that all pupils should become increasingly independent as they move through the College, able to fulfil their academic potential both here and beyond, in whatever culture they choose to study and work. The vast majority of pupils will progress to either a British or American university, and it is with this in mind that we wish to make their time at the College as productive and inclusive as possible. This brief guide describes the support that we offer.

Teaching Staff

The Head of EAL is Ms Sarah Horsfield, who taught English and was a Boarding Parent in a British International School in Bangkok, Thailand, before joining the College; she has a CELTA qualification. She is joined by Ms Elly Sioufi, who holds the RSA CTEFLA and has also taught French at the College.

Aims

We teach pupils throughout the school, from Years 7 to 13, and our main aim is to increase their communicative competence so that they are confident about speaking and writing in English. Once their needs are assessed, some pupils will be given 1 to 1 tuition for the whole academic year, which enables us to form a close working relationship with them, with lessons tailored specifically to suit their needs. Other pupils will work in small groups. They will practise reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, with particular focus being placed on accuracy and fluency in their written work.

Entrance Examinations – Lower, Middle and Upper Schools

There are two EAL entrance papers: one for non-native speakers entering at 11+ and 13+ and another for pupils seeking to enter the Upper School. The Lower/Middle School papers include:

- Reading comprehension
- Writing e.g. writing a letter, a description or a short story

In the writing section, we look for grammatical and syntactical range and accuracy, as well as evidence of a wide vocabulary.

Entrance Examination – Upper School

Prospective candidates for the Upper School are asked to write an IELTS style essay, which requires them to relate facts and opinions on a topical issue, such as the advantages and disadvantages of the internet. A competent performance in this paper indicates that the candidate has the English skills required to progress well at Dulwich.

As a condition of entry to the Upper School, pupils will also be asked to sit the IELTS test, or provide a recent IELTS test result. We will use this result to help determine the level of EAL support each pupil is likely to need to satisfy university entry requirements. Most top universities ask for a minimum mark of 7 ('good user of English') in all components of the IELTS test – reading, writing, speaking and listening. Pupils who arrive at Dulwich College with at least a 7 in all four components will attend Liberal Studies with their year group, rather than have EAL lessons. Pupils who do not have this level on arrival will have between one and five periods of EAL lessons a week and will sit the IELTS test at the end of the Lent term.

Screening of pupils

In the Lower and Middle Schools, the initial contact with pupils is when we mark their entrance examinations. The Head of EAL liaises with the College Registrar and is kept informed as to which candidates receive offers. The Head of EAL will then make contact with pupils via their Boarding Masters when they arrive at the College, and after an assessment, a decision is made as to which boys will receive EAL lessons. Lessons are offered to all EAL pupils whose accuracy and proficiency in written and/or spoken English require improvement. A register is then compiled and sent to all staff. It is updated regularly and available for all staff to check. The EAL register lists the boys who receive support along with the name of their EAL teacher and their IELTS status.

Lessons

In order to minimise disruption, pupils are not withdrawn from lessons and Years 7 to 11 lessons are taught during timetabled EAL lessons, at lunchtimes, after school or in the evenings.

The Year 12 and 13 EAL classes are taught during Liberal Studies periods and 1 to 1 lessons take place throughout the school day.

Lesson Content and Examinations

The EAL department has its own budget for resources and materials. We are well-equipped with teachers' and pupils' exercise and workbooks, reference books, listening materials and resources preparing pupils for EAL examinations.

In Years 7 to 11, pupils are either seen individually or in small groups so that we can support their learning in English and other language-based subjects, as the need arises. We also work on vocabulary and grammar, according to each boy's individual needs. At the heart of our teaching is an understanding of how essential it is for pupils to improve their cultural awareness, so we regularly use newspapers and magazines with age-appropriate features to equip pupils with conversational skills and substance.

EAL candidates in Years 7 to 10 join their peers to sit internal examinations in English and all other subjects.

Many of our Year 11 pupils attain the highest grades in GCSE English Language and Literature, however the few boys who do not attain a 6 or above are expected to take IELTS in Year 12.

New Year 12 pupils will take the IELTS test as part of their university application, if they do not have GCSE English Language at a 6 or above when they arrive. Our EAL course therefore focuses on the skills required to achieve a high mark in this test. With regard to the IELTS test, university entry requirements vary, but most require at least 6.5 ('competent - good user of English'), with others asking for at least 7 ('good user of English') in all four components of the test. We expect pupils to attain a level 7 in all components before being able to leave EAL support.

For self-study, we have a section of the Wodehouse Library devoted to EAL reference books, examination practice books and a wide selection of graded readers.

EAL Diploma

All new EAL pupils are expected to complete a Diploma which encourages and requires them to participate in various co-curricular activities, such as giving a speech to a Society, representing their Day House in a Sport or Music competition or visiting famous landmarks in London. Once completed, pupils are awarded an EAL tie.

Communication with Parents

As most parents of boys who receive EAL support live overseas, it is unlikely that in-person Parents Evenings will provide an opportunity to discuss their son's progress, however, online appointments are available. If parents are able to visit the College, then the EAL teacher will be happy to meet with them, as other teachers do, by arrangement through the Form Tutor. Parents are encouraged to communicate via email with the Form Tutor and the EAL teacher as they wish.

Reports are sent to parents for pupils who receive EAL support at the same time as other subject reports.

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