



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF MILAN

LEARNING TO EXCEL SINCE 1969

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

Typical EAL (ESOL) Learner Profile and the Implications for the BSM

The BSM welcomes learners from all national and social groupings. We celebrate their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Some of our learners have led international lifestyles, meaning they have had frequent changes of school and language of instruction. Others come from the local Italian community. These learners tend to be very fluent, but they may require support in writing, technical vocabulary and language processing to fully access the curriculum.

We offer English as an Additional Language (EAL) support across the school, both in mainstream and through EAL withdrawal classes in a way that meets the needs of each learner. Programmes are flexible and use modern, engaging and varied teacher/learner strategies. We look at both the individual and their linguistic and cultural influences to determine the best way to improve English language proficiency.

Rationale and Aims

English is the medium of communication and learning at the BSM. The EAL Department's mission is to equip our learners with the English language skills they need to thrive both socially and academically.

Specialist EAL teachers work to develop and deliver personalised programmes. EAL is taught across Key stages 1, 2 and 3; in Key Stage 4 we offer the IGCSE ESL course and in Key Stage 5 we offer English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Specifically, the Department:

- provides personalised programmes for EAL learners so they can access mainstream subjects and integrate successfully into the BSM community
- provides specialised and more advanced technical learning opportunities, such as English for Academic Purposes
- nurtures a learning environment where individuals feel confident in expressing themselves in English
- enables learners to reach their full potential and participate fully in all subjects through the use of English
- helps subject teachers recognise that EAL learners frequently have subject knowledge that exceeds their linguistic ability, and this should not impede their full inclusion (not least in super-curricular activities)
- offers INSET and support to the wider school to nurture teaching practices that cater for EAL learners across the curriculum

Entrance Assessment and Further Tracking

Entrance Assessment

Senior School applicants who do not have English as their main language are assessed by an English language specialist to determine their level of proficiency. Assessments tell us how learners will cope with the academic demands of studying through English. The 60-minute assessment has multiple choice and writing components that establish range and accuracy. Where possible, we hold face-to-face interviews to assess fluency and accuracy.



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In Primary School, the interviewer decides if an assessment is necessary. If reports indicate English language proficiency, then no assessment is required. Learners are generally assessed using Cambridge ESOL exams, however oral assessments and writing samples are taken if these are more suitable for the needs and developmental stage of the child.

Further tracking

Key Stage 1 and 2 learners are continually assessed using the NASSEA EAL Assessment Framework. The 7-step framework covers four skills: reading, listening and understanding, speaking, and writing. Throughout the school year, samples of learners' work from both EAL and mainstream classes are collated and discussed with teachers to monitor progress across the steps.

All Year 7s are assessed at the start of the year on their level of vocabulary and grammar. This helps identify learners who may need EAL support. In Years 7-9, we use continuous assessment to monitor EAL learners. We combine formative assessment in lessons with end-of-term summative assessment. At the end of each term, we decide on the level of future EAL provision.

Some Key Stage 4 learners should take the IGCSE in English as a Second Language (ESL) instead of the English Language and Literature GCSE. At the end of Key Stage 3 the Head of Faculty for English will refer suitable candidates to the Head of EAL. Additionally, Year 10 learners may be counselled to switch to IGCSE ESL if they achieve failing grades for their mid-year English Language and Literature examinations. This will be done in consultation with the Head of Senior School, the Head of Faculty for English, and the Head of EAL.

Some Key Stage 5 learners need support to develop their English for Academic Purposes. At the end of Year 11 or start of Year 12, we identify these learners through teacher recommendation and IGCSE results. They participate in an intensive English for Academic Purposes course. This is arranged in conjunction with the Director of IB.

Across all Key Stages, learners who are struggling with subject lessons may need to re-join an EAL programme. Although parents are consulted, the final decision is made by the Head of Primary School or Head of Senior School, on the recommendation of the relevant Head of EAL.

Referral procedure

If teachers have concerns about a learner's level of English, they should contact the Head of EAL, who will arrange an EAL assessment. The Head of EAL, relevant EAL teaching staff and the subject teacher(s) will discuss the assessment and decide how to proceed. If appropriate, other staff will be consulted, such as SEN support. Parents are consulted and informed if EAL provision is necessary.

Exit procedures

Primary School

Based on the NASSEA EAL Assessment Framework, once learners reach step 6 or above on all four skills, they generally no longer need EAL support.



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Senior School

Learners are assessed on a case-by-case basis. The decision that EAL provision is no longer required is based on assessment and discussion with subject teachers to ensure that the learner is adequately accessing the curriculum. The option of in-class support is available to help learners transition into mainstream lessons.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Programmes

Primary School

In the Primary School, EAL provision is tailored to meet the needs of individual learner and is focused around a mixture of targeted withdrawal and in-class support. The emphasis for children starting the school with low levels of English is to provide them with survival language so that they can integrate and socialise successfully throughout the school day. As their English improves, the emphasis moves to helping students learn low frequency subject specific vocabulary, improving grammatical accuracy, and being able to write successfully in different styles and genres.

A variety of materials are used when providing EAL support in the Primary School. This means there is flexibility to meet individual needs. Through discussion, EAL and mainstream teachers decide when it is more effective to support learners in class, to ensure that they continue to progress. In Key Stages 1 & 2, learners receive EAL support through three different packages: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Each package includes a mixture of targeted withdrawal EAL lessons, in-class support, and online English lessons.

- **Gold Package** = NASSEA Step 1-3 (CEF A0- A2+) - approximately 8-10 periods of support
- **Silver Package** = NASSEA Step 3-5 (CEF A2+ - B1) - approximately 5-8 periods of support
- **Bronze Package** = NASSEA Step 5-7 (CEF B1 – B2) - approximately 1-4 periods of support

Gold package pupils will receive EAL provision during Italian lessons. **Silver** package pupils will usually take Italian, however this is at the discretion of the EAL and mainstream teacher and as it may be preferable to receive EAL provision. **Bronze** package pupils will take the full Italian programme.

All 3 packages, Gold, Silver and Bronze contain:

- **Withdrawal lessons** which are targeted to match the needs of the learner and cover areas such as survival English, grammar for writing and curriculum topic vocabulary
- **In-class support** which is usually given during literacy lessons where the EAL teacher will work with the mainstream teacher to provide activities to scaffold learning in the mainstream class
- **Online lessons which** focus on 3 key areas: survival English, curriculum content and phonics

Senior School

In the Senior School, EAL learners are put into small groups based on their level of English. Additionally, we work within the timetable to try to minimise disruption to their other subjects. We use the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) (global scales [here](#)) and consultation with subject teachers as the basis for determining support:

- **Key Stage 3:** Year 7 learners at CEF Level B1 or below, and Year 8-9 learners at CEF Level B2 or below
- **Key Stage 4 (IGCSE ESL):** learners who are at CEF Level B2 or below
- **Key Stage 5:** learners in need of English for Academic Purposes



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Course content and structure is flexible according to the needs of the cohort. A general outline for each Key Stage is given below:

Key Stage 3: Five support levels are provided based on individual needs analyses. Provision ranges from 2-3 periods per week to 10 or more periods. These lessons attract additional fees and take place during literacy intensive subjects such as French, History, Geography, or English. Course content adapts to the needs of the learners and materials are drawn from a range of sources including realia, cross-curricular materials, and ELT resources. The desired outcomes include:

- Developing effective language learning strategies
- Building study skills and good learning habits
- Becoming more autonomous and reflective learners
- Understanding and fulfilling subject expectations (e.g. presentations, project work, essays etc.)
- Acquiring rich and useful vocabulary to help access the curriculum
- Communicating successfully through both written and spoken English
- Developing a life-long love of reading, leading to a deep and rich knowledge of English

Key Stage 4: IGCSE ESL is a two-year course that is offered as an alternative to first language English IGCSEs. It is aimed at students for whom English is not their first language/mother-tongue but for whom it is a lingua franca or language of study. We go beyond the IGCSE examination curriculum to provide materials that act as a foundation for subsequent Sixth Form English studies.

Sixth Form: English for Academic Purposes is offered to our IB students who require extra support. These courses attract additional fees and are offered at appropriate times on the timetable or on a self-access basis via an appropriate learning platform. The primary aim of the course is to equip learners to meet and exceed the academic requirements of the IB Diploma. Courses are designed around the needs of the individual learners, but common areas of focus include:

- Extended writing and research skills
- Reading academic texts
- Referencing and academic honesty
- Advanced study skills and personal organisation
- Oral presentation skills

Related Policies:

Language Policy

SEND Policy