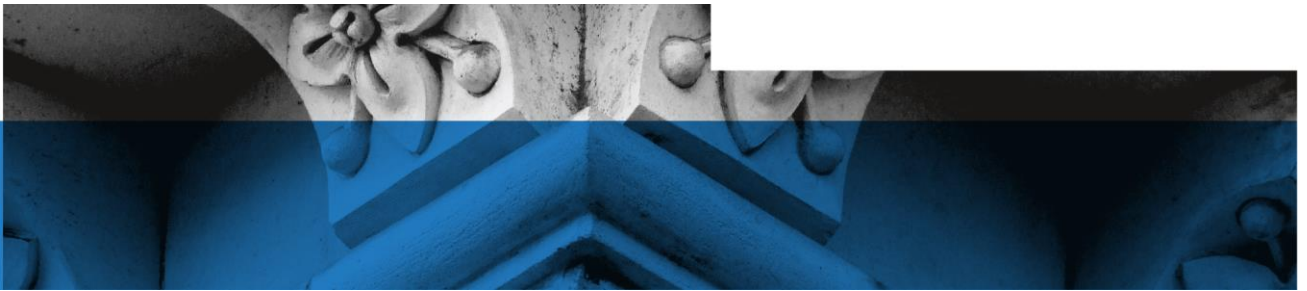


DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619



EAL Guide

2025-2026

Introduction

The College receives a number of new 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 PGCE and CELTA qualification. She is joined by Mrs Ballard-Ridley, who taught English at a private language school in Italy for a number of years, before returning to the UK. She has taught at Kensington Academy of English and Wimbledon School of English. She holds the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA qualifications.

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. Pupils in Year 12 and Year 13 will be prepared for the IELTS or other English language proficiency tests.

Entrance Examinations – Lower, Middle and Upper Schools

Lower and Middle school candidates sit the same English Entrance paper as all other candidates.

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.

Lessons

In order to minimise disruption, pupils are not withdrawn from lessons and are taught during timetabled EAL lessons, at lunchtimes, after school or in the evenings.

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.

Most Year 12 pupils will need to take the IELTS test as part of their university application and our EAL course therefore focuses on the skills required to achieve a high mark in this test. We expect pupils to attain a level 7 in all components (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking) before being able to leave EAL support.

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.

Sarah Horsfield
Head of EAL

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