



**British International School
of Ljubljana**
an Orbital Education School



Languages Policy

**(Including: English as an Additional
Language)**



Introduction

The British International School of Ljubljana is a community of resilient, respectful lifelong learners which offers a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment where every member of the community is encouraged to strive for excellence.

At BISL we are committed to providing all learners with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of student achievement and attitude.

This policy summarises our expectations and common working practices, which reflect the aims and objectives of the School and support its Vision Mission and Values.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

BISL Internationalism, Interculturalism and Global Citizenship Policy.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

We aim to inspire lifelong learners and caring global citizens, in a community where everyone feels encouraged, supported and challenged.

Our Mission

We provide a **high quality British style international education** in English, balancing tradition and innovation.

We aim to be the internationally recognised, **outstanding educational choice** for families in the region.

Our passion is creating a **positive, safe and nurturing learning environment** in which everyone is valued as individuals, empowering them to be versatile, motivated and caring people.

We will endeavour to **create opportunities** to develop creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills through an **inclusive and personalised experience**.

Our Values

Excellence - We strive for excellence in everything we do.

Respect - We learn at school by showing respect to everyone in the community

Responsibility - We are engaged, promoting actions and behaviours that support a sustainable future.

Integrity - We are transparent, honest and ethical in all our relationships.

Compassion - We are kind and caring, encouraging everyone to succeed.



Languages Provision

The school's main language of instruction is English. The school library contains books in many other languages spoken across the school.

Aside from English, the school provides instruction in the following languages:

- Slovene – 3 tiers: Beginners, intermediate and first language.
- French (from Year 7)
- German (from Year 3)

Students are encouraged to become aware of their responsibilities as kind and thoughtful individuals, mindful of the needs of others, in order to become valued and caring members of the school, local and global communities (BISL Internationalism, Interculturalism and global citizenship policy), and whilst they can revert to speaking their first language during break times, this must not be at the exclusion of others.

BISL seeks to promote and celebrate linguistic diversity through whole school events such as Mother Tongue Day and International Day. The school also collaborates with other international schools through events such as MUN.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision

1. INTRODUCTION:

EAL at BISL is defined as per the Department of Education's definition, which states that "a pupil is recorded as having English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English."¹

EAL students, spanning from absolute beginners to those with considerable fluency, will have varying degrees of difficulty in accessing the full curriculum and achieving their full potential. Research has shown that Conversational aspects of proficiency reached peer-appropriate levels usually within about two years of exposure to English but a period of 5-7 years was required, on average, to approach grade norms in academic aspects of English (e.g. vocabulary knowledge).² A more recent study shows that it will take students who are new to English at least six or more years to be rated as competent or fluent³.

These students benefit from language support to unlock their full academic potential within the mainstream education system.

This policy delineates the school's aims, objectives, and strategies concerning the needs of our EAL pupils, facilitating their journey towards reaching their utmost potential.



2. AIMS:

- To facilitate EAL pupils in achieving proficiency across all four English language domains: speaking, listening, reading and writing, in order to be able to achieve their full academic potential in subject areas across the curriculum.
- To ensure all students can access the comprehensive curriculum at BISL and smoothly integrate into the mainstream classes as soon as possible, through a combination of in-class support and a tailored EAL curriculum.
- To conduct thorough assessments of EAL students' language skills and deliver individual and group learning plans, which cater to their areas of need.
- To empower teachers and support staff with the requisite knowledge, skills and resources to be able to support and monitor EAL students, through ongoing professional development training.
- To systematically monitor students' progress systematically and use the data to inform classroom management, curriculum planning and the setting of targets.

¹ Department for Education, 2020 ([link](#))

² Cummins, 2008 ([link](#)); Demie & Strand 2006 ([link](#))

³ Strand & Lindorff, 2020 ([link](#))



3. PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESS TRACKING:

The EAL program is designed to support children progressively from Years 2 to Year 11.

Children in the Early Years Program (Reception) and Y1 do not require specialist EAL support at this early stage, as language acquisition occurs more quickly through play-like activities. However, as research has demonstrated the significance of early language support⁴, our EAL trained teaching staff will ensure our youngest students aren't left behind, by providing various EAL strategies, such as singing, encouraging student talking time, introducing survival vocabulary, utilizing songs for learning, incorporating phonics, providing visual and tactile support and more. These strategies ensure that our youngest students are well-prepared, not only for social language development but also for the eventual transition to the higher academic language demands of the.

It is important to note that the majority of students at BISL speak at least two or more languages, and for 90% of our students, English is their second or even third language. However, not all students are enrolled in the EAL programme. Research shows that the definition of EAL in itself is a poor indicator of pupils' likely level of educational achievement. Instead, it is their proficiency in English that is central to understanding achievement and levels of support needed.⁵

EAL support for a student is the outcome of an analysis of the student's language proficiency which involves the classroom teacher, the EAL Specialist teacher, the initial assessment during induction, classroom observations, standardised assessments (PTE & CAT4), and additional data if available. Student's previous schooling and family background is taken into account, including language of instruction and additional languages spoken at home.

Entry into the EAL programme is as follows:

Entry into the EAL program follows a systematic process, including the following steps:

1. **Student Profile:** Parents are invited to complete a student profile, providing insights into their child's prior language learning experiences.
2. **Discussion with Class Teacher:** Discussion with the classroom teacher based on observations in the first two weeks of schooling at BISL and ongoing tracking of pupil's progress.
3. **Initial Assessments:** These assessments may encompass standardised assessments administered by the school at enrolment into BISL; EAL assessments of the four domains of English language, administered by an EAL Specialist; and assessments administered by Class Teachers in reading and writing.
4. **Follow-up Assessments:** Formative and summative assessments are employed consistently through the year to track student progress and to highlight areas of need.

⁴ Strand & Hessel, 2018 ([link](#))

⁵ Strand & Hessel, 2018 ([link](#))



Ongoing EAL Assessment

The bulk of our assessment in EAL consists of ongoing formative assessments during each class, providing the teacher with a log of notes on the student's progress. At least once per term there is a summative assessment on different domains of the language.

BELL Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework: We utilize the acclaimed Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework for Schools, which consists of two distinct sets of rating scales—one for the Primary school and one for the Secondary school⁶. These scales comprehensively cover four domains of language knowledge and use: listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing. English language proficiency in each domain is represented by five proficiency bands, ranging from A to E (A-New to English, B-Early acquisition, C-Developing competence, D-Competent, E-Fluent).

Throughout the school year, samples of students' work from both EAL and mainstream classes are collated and there is a regular dialogue between teachers to monitor their progress across the steps.

4. ORGANISATION:

The extent of EAL support is tailored to individual student needs and recommendations, ranging from 3 to 15 (30 minute) periods per week. Following an assessment of each student's proficiency level they are categorized into one of three Tiers.

Parents are integral partners in their child's academic and social development. As such, they commit to following the professional guidance of the school with regard to the effective academic or social progress of the student. This will include the student's participation in learning support activities if required.

EAL groups are organized by Key Stages, aligning with the educational stages at our school:

- KS1 (Year 2)
- Lower KS2 (Year 3 and Year 4)
- Upper KS2 (Year 4 and Year 5)
- KS3 (Years 7-9)
- KS4 (Year 10 and 11)
- KS5 (Year 12 and 13)

Tier 3 EAL Course (intensive support)

Students in Tier 3 receive a comprehensive level of support. They attend specialist EAL classes running parallel to (but outside of) the mainstream classes for English and Reading Carousel. The EAL classes are conducted by Specialist EAL Teachers and focus on survival

⁶ BELL Foundation Assessment Framework [link](#)



language, communication, basic sentence structures and vocabulary. Students continue to participate in other specialist subjects: Topic, Maths, P.E., and Performing Arts.

In Secondary school, intensive support is provided through in-class assistance and dedicated specialist EAL classes conducted outside of mainstream classes.

Students transition to Tier 2 once they have acquired basic survival vocabulary to cope with school life and reach most descriptors in the Early Acquisition band of the BELL Foundation Assessment Tracker.

Tier 2 EAL Course (moderate support):

Tier 2 students are integrated into most of their mainstream lessons and follow the standard curriculum. However, they continue to benefit from EAL support to build on their academic proficiency through a combination of EAL specialist lessons and in-class support by an EAL Specialist.

Tier 2 students attend specialist EAL classes running parallel to (but outside of) the mainstream classes. Additionally, as well as receive targeted support during English and Topic lessons in mainstream classes by our EAL trained staff.

Tier 1 EAL Course (basic support)

Tier 1 students receiving EAL support are generally self-sufficient enough following the curriculum independently but may still require some support in specific language areas. This support is tailored to their individual needs and is delivered as needed, either within or outside the classroom setting, based on each student's requirements.

The EAL specialist lessons take place in the designated EAL classrooms or other study areas.

5. COMMUNICATION

Upon determining that a student requires EAL support based on the observations and assessments detailed in this policy, parents will be promptly notified about their child's Tier placement and the initiation of EAL lessons. This notification will be sent to parents via email.

The email notification will include the following information:

- The tier placement of the child (Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3).
- The anticipated start date of EAL lessons.
- Notification that there are additional fees associated with the EAL provision.



Following the initial email notification, parents can expect to be contacted by our marketing team in the subsequent weeks. The marketing team will be responsible for sending an invoice for the EAL provision to parents. This invoice will outline the specific fees associated with the chosen EAL tier (Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3) and provide instructions for payment.

6. CURRICULUM:

The EAL Program is designed to cater to the student's individual needs.

Students in Tier 3 benefit from a comprehensive approach to their EAL education. We utilize a combination of resources, including the BELL Foundation framework, to equip students with the essential language skills needed to progress successfully through the EAL Framework steps.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 students follow the curriculum of the mainstream classes they are attending. To support their learning, EAL targeted assistance is provided to develop specific skills and competencies, as well as through provision of differentiated or adapted tasks, which enable students to participate in classes and complete set targets.

7. TEACHING AND LEARNING:

At BISL, all staff are expected to maintain high teacher standards and have the responsibility to support EAL students and meet their educational needs.

To ensure that the needs of our EAL students are met, all staff are expected to:

- Provide differentiated or adapted work for EAL students, to enable them to reach the set objectives and participate in class activities.
- Employ a variety of strategies within each lesson to reinforce understanding and foster language development in context.
- Maintain high expectations for all students encouraging participation in all classroom activities and tasks; assign appropriate tasks, which challenge and motivate students.
- Carefully Monitor progress through formative and summative assessments.
- Recognise that EAL students may need more time to integrate socially with their peers, may have difficulties in processing answers and completing extended work, or additional SEN.
- Work closely with the EAL Specialists in providing the necessary support for EAL students, to enable them to integrate into the mainstream classes as soon as possible.
- Continue to develop their EAL teaching skills through attending professional development training sessions for staff in this area.



EAL Specialist

In order to ensure that the needs of EAL students are met, the EAL specialists:

- Conduct EAL assessments as part of admissions process and to gauge students' English proficiency and establish the level of EAL support needed.
- Provide specialised EAL classes as well as in-class support for students across Key Stages.
- Are familiar with the EAL framework used to assess and monitor progress of EAL students.
- Monitor the teaching and learning of students with EAL in accordance with teacher standards requirements.
- Monitor student progress, working collaboratively with the Class or Subject Teachers/Tutors, through formative and summative assessment and tracking data.
- Contribute to the School Reports (EAL Report) and provide feedback to parents through Parent-Teacher meetings.
- Maintain close communication with the SENCo regarding any concerns related to additional /SEN needs the EAL student may have.
- Compile and keep an up-to-date an EAL Register and attendance.
- Provide training and resources for teachers to effectively teach and support EAL students with differentiation techniques to ensure that all students can access the lesson and meet learning objectives.

8. TRANSITION:

When a student progresses from one Key Stage (KS) into another, a seamless transition process is implemented. When a student goes from KS2 to KS3, the student's EAL file is forwarded from the Primary to the Secondary EAL specialist and a briefing takes place between the Primary and Secondary EAL specialists, together with the Head of EAL. During this meeting, Primary EAL specialist shares all pertinent information and further recommendation based on the final assessments of the student and his progress up to the transition period.

9. Exiting the EAL programme

Our exit criteria are designed to ensure that students have reached a level of language proficiency that allows them to fully participate in mainstream classes without the need for additional EAL support. Once these criteria are met, students transition out of the EAL program and continue their academic journey with confidence in their language abilities.

The determination of exit readiness is a collaborative effort involving EAL specialists, classroom teachers, and other relevant staff. It is based on a holistic assessment of students' language skills and their ability to engage effectively in age-appropriate academic tasks.



1. Based on the assessment procedures of the EAL Specialist teacher.
2. Where relevant, in consultation with the Classroom Teacher and SENCo (if other SEN needs are present).
3. Collaborative discussions with the EAL teachers and the Head of EAL are conducted, with appraisal meetings taking place at least once per block.
4. The final decision involves the EAL specialist, the Head of EAL and the form teacher in Secondary or the Class teacher in primary.

Special Educational Needs:

BISL recognises that while some needs of EAL students may overlap with those of students identified with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the identification and provision for these two types of needs are distinct. Students identified as having EAL do not necessarily have SEN. Should SEN be identified, EAL students have equal access to the school's SEN provision. Students who have been identified as both SEN and EAL receive EAL provision based on their SEN needs stated in the Learning Support Plan or Individual Educational Plan, with prior consultation between the EAL Teacher, the SENCO and the Class Teacher.

Review and Evaluation

This policy is to be reviewed and evaluated annually.

Due for Review:	July 2026
PREPARED BY: Tobija Siter, Head of EAL	28/8/2023
Updated:	02/2025
Reviewed and approved by: Mel Hitchcocks, Principal	21 st July 2025.