



*EAL
Handbook*



THE BRITISH SCHOOL
OF GUANGZHOU
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL



NORD
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EDUCATION

Be Ambitious

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Introduction

At the British School of Guangzhou, all classes (except for foreign languages) are taught in English. In order to succeed at school, to learn and enjoy learning, and to participate in school life, students must be able to use and communicate in English at a level suitable for study at that age.

Coming to a new school can be daunting for a child – new teachers, new friends, new surroundings, new subjects and a completely unfamiliar school life. It can take students some time before they feel confident and relaxed in their new environment. If a child cannot speak the same language as others in the school, this becomes even more difficult. Imagine trying to start a new job in a company where you cannot understand anyone. Life can be difficult at first and everyone needs a little help during stressful times.

The EAL programmes at BSG are designed to help students whose English level is below the standard needed to study successfully alongside their classmates. It helps them to quickly develop their language skills, understand school life, talk and interact with teachers, classmates, and others, and get the best out of their education. It allows students to learn English with others in a relaxed and friendly environment, with specialist teachers, where they can make friends and learn how to express themselves properly in a different language alongside other English language learners.

“The goal of EAL is to help students reach a level of English proficiency where they can successfully access their mainstream studies in English alongside their peers.”

It is important to remember that needing EAL support is in no way a criticism of a child or a suggestion that they are not intelligent. English, like any second or additional language, is a skill that has to be learnt, just like playing the violin, or flying a plane. Nobody would criticize Bill Gates because he isn't an expert pianist! And like other skills it takes time, diligence, and enthusiasm to master. What is in fact remarkable is that most EAL students do successfully become fluent in English and can use it to a very high level. In fact, many former EAL students have gone on to achieve great success at GCSE and A level, to be school leaders, and to contribute hugely to the BSG and wider community.

“English is a language... Not a measure of intelligence...”

Whether your child is a complete beginner in English, in the early stages of learning English, or needs to progress beyond social English to Academic English, the EAL department is here to help your child enjoy their time at school and acquire the language tools they need to perform to their full potential in all their lessons.

Language and Learning

Language and learning are inextricably linked. Language is not merely a means by which we demonstrate what we know, it is also one of the most important means by which we learn and refine our understanding. Success in learning is therefore tied to language development.

Competence in English is clearly a factor that will influence the school experience and learning outcomes of EAL students. These students not only require English to communicate with their peers and teachers but also to continue the process of conceptual development begun in their home language, and to reach and surpass the academic requirements of their school studies.

Developing competence in English as an EAL student is a long-term process and students will develop at different rates depending on a range of factors including previous educational experiences, emotional and personal motivations, and the level and degree of exposure to English.



What is EAL?

EAL means English as an Additional Language. This programme has been developed for children who do not speak, read or write English as their first language and therefore need EAL support to help them improve their level of English and be able to succeed in their mainstream study at an age-appropriate level. It is delivered by specialist teachers, trained, experienced and qualified in additional language acquisition, and delivered in small groups in a rigorous but supportive environment.

Students who do not speak English as their first language may find that life can be difficult in an English speaking school. They might find it hard to understand and be understood by their classmates and their teachers or understand subject specific vocabulary. They may not be able to complete homework properly because they do not fully understand what they are supposed to do. Writing might be very difficult for them because they are still working on English grammar. Socially, they might find it hard to make friends or talk to people because they do not feel confident speaking English. If a child has any of these issues, they will benefit from EAL support.

How are EAL needs determined?

When applying to BSG, all students take a pre-entry assessment, which includes an assessment of their English levels in relation to the level needed to study successfully at that age group. If the school determines that a child needs EAL support they will be enrolled in the appropriate EAL programme.

During their EAL study children are regularly assessed (by classwork, coursework, homework, tests, and examinations) against Language Targets appropriate for their age and English level. Reaching these targets shows that a child has sufficient English to succeed in the mainstream, at which time they will graduate from the EAL programme into the mainstream where, of course, they will continue to develop their social and academic English alongside their classmates.

It is important to note that the English levels and Language Targets get increasingly advanced as children get older.

Therefore, a child may be succeeding in improving their English, but still require support as they move to a higher year. As mentioned above, children learn languages at very different speeds, and language acquisition becomes more difficult as a child gets older. For these reasons our EAL provision and students' EAL needs change significantly in different phases and key stages, from Early Years, through lower primary and upper primary, into secondary and beyond.



Early Years

Young children are able to learn new knowledge and skills at an amazing rate. All students in Reception are in the process of learning how to communicate, whether this be in English, or another native language. The role of the EAL programme in EYFS is to complement this learning in English. Dedicated Early Years EAL teachers take small groups of children out of the mainstream classroom (EAL extraction) and, using an exciting curriculum involving games, songs, and other age-appropriate techniques, they lead the children in developing their speaking, listening, vocabulary, and phonics (letters & sounds) abilities. The EAL department also works extremely closely with mainstream teachers, helping to plan and co-teach appropriate English instruction within the mainstream classroom. The students, armed with their new English skills, are rapidly able to participate alongside their classmates, in the broader study of communication skills, reading, writing, and learning in English that are developing in all children at this age. It is an absolute delight to observe many young children who enter the EAL programme with no English ability playing with their friends and actively participating in school in English after just a few months. Children who graduate the EYFS EAL programme have the opportunity to develop their English skills in school alongside native-speaking children, as their education progresses.



Key Stage 1

As with Early Years children, students studying in KS1 are still in the process of developing their cognitive and language skills in general. This means that mastering basic English skills at this age will allow a child to continue to develop and progress in English study alongside and at a similar level to their classmates. EAL students in Years 1 and 2 study functional and practical communicative English in small groups with dedicated and experienced KS1 EAL teachers, and a carefully planned and fully interactive curriculum. These teachers also work alongside students in the mainstream classroom, where, alongside mainstream teachers, they plan and co-teach to support the children in their understanding, use of, and learning in English. It is in this stage that all children are developing their skills and understanding in phonics, reading and writing, as well as general cognitive and communicative development. Children who receive EAL support from teachers and parents at this time have a fantastic opportunity to go on to become fully fluent and developed English users, with a true love of learning, as they develop and progress through their schooling in English.



Key Stage 2

Most children in Upper Primary (Y3-Y6) will already have learnt (to some extent) to speak, read and write in their native language(s). Learning English as an additional language at this stage therefore presents different challenges than with the youngest children. The EAL curriculum at KS2 is designed to help students develop and practice the four key skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, alongside introducing and using key vocabulary and grammar. These are taught by specialist EAL teachers in small groups. Students at this stage may show a wide range of English abilities, from absolute beginner through to students who can use English quite fluently but may need help in improving their vocabulary or writing to an age- appropriate level. Therefore Progress in EAL targets have been developed for each age group to ensure that all students are working towards reaching English skills levels that they need to succeed in their broader education. Individual needs and progress are carefully monitored, and EAL teachers co-teach with with carefully targeted instruction and help for individuals and small groups as required.



Key Stage 3

As students move into and progress through secondary school, the English language demands of their studies continues to increase in range and complexity. In particular, students must be able to not only use general inter-communication skills (in fact many EAL students are very fluent in social English), but also the more advanced cognitive and academic English that is needed for higher-level study and success. For this reason it is rare for beginners in English to enter the secondary school; the KS3 EAL curriculum focuses on developing and moving students forward from abilities in social and communicative English to the use of more advanced academic English in a range of academic genres and situations, with steadily increasing levels of complexity and sophistication. Students are taught by specialist EAL teachers in small groups using a range of age-appropriate materials and activities (instead of Modern Foreign Language class). Confident use of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in an academic environment, alongside development of a wide vocabulary and more complex grammar, are the key targets at this stage. At the same time students are also expected to be fully and successfully participating in other subjects (e.g. Science, Mathematics, History, etc.) where their mainstream teachers will also be helping them learn and develop the subject specific skills and language (e.g. reading literature, report writing, specialist biology vocabulary, etc.) that they need. As you can imagine, it is no easy task to study at this level in a language that is not your own. The EAL and mainstream teachers work closely with EAL students to help them learn and develop the necessary study skills, personal and motivational approaches, and successful academic dispositions and core values, as well as the English language, which will serve them in the future.



Key Stage 4 & 5

Once students enter the public examination (GCSE, AS, and A level) courses, it is expected that their English proficiency is sufficient to study at these levels, and therefore there are no EAL programmes in these years. However, the EAL department continues to teach and work closely with students who are identified as needing some further support in their English language, in several ways:

1) IGCSE English as a Second Language (ESL).

Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language is a fully accredited GCSE-level qualification. It is accepted by schools, universities and employers as proof of ability to understand and communicate in English. It is aimed at students whose first language is not English, but who use it as a lingua franca or language of study. Successful ESL candidates have better educational or employment prospects and gain lifelong skills, including:

- better communicative ability in English;
- improved ability to understand a range of social registers and styles;
- a greater awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills;
- a greater international perspective;
- a sound foundation for progression AS and A Level studies.

The IGCSE ESL programme is taught over two years by specialist EAL teachers, and is hugely successful in preparing students with the English abilities needed for higher study. At BSG, students who wish to study AS and A levels in the sixth form can demonstrate their English ability by achieving a C grade or higher in ESL.

2) Language Support Programme (LSP KS4)

Whether studying English as a Second Language or English as a First Language at GCSE, some students can benefit from additional support and time to focus on their English across all their academic subjects. By choosing one fewer GCSE options, these students can work closely with teachers to improve their academic English, to have additional help and time to complete coursework to a high standard, and to put in the additional hours needed to confidently learn the significant subject-specific academic vocabulary required at this Key Stage.

3) Academic English & IELTS Programme (KS5)

All students in this Key Stage have competent (or better) English usage. However, the demands of A-level and pre-university courses are very high and selected students can study with EAL teachers to improve specific academic English skills (e.g. essay writing, seminar skills, reading advanced academic texts, etc.) In addition, most students who plan to study at university abroad will need to take an examination to demonstrate their English proficiency level; in China this examination is usually the IELTS, and the EAL department can help students prepare and study to reach the required level in this international English exam.



How is English Level Measured?

The foundation for measuring the proficiency or level of a student's English at BSG is the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). This universally accepted system describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively in English. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning.

A		B		C	
Basic User		Independent User		Proficient User	
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Breakthrough	Waystage	Threshold	Vantage	Effective Operational Proficiency	Mastery

At BSG we have taken the CEFR descriptors at different levels to create a series of Target Statements for different English Skills (Speaking, Reading, Writing & Listening), which describe what a child of a certain age should be able to achieve. EAL and mainstream teachers work together to assess whether a child is at their age-appropriate level of English using these Target Statements, based on teacher observations of classwork, homework, tests and assessments. If they generally are, then they can graduate from the EAL programme. For further details of the EAL Target Statements please refer to the Target Statements Booklets produced for each year group, or contact an EAL teacher.

EAL Outside the Classroom

Students at BSG certainly receive a great deal of English input, instruction, practice and use both within their EAL classes and within mainstream classes. However, learning English (or any language) proficiently requires both time and effort, and students will also need to use as much English as possible outside the classroom.

Reading in English is fundamental to improvement. For younger children, being read to, or reading with, an adult every day will help develop both language skills and a love of reading. As children get older, they should read for themselves for enjoyment: any source material (books, newspapers, websites, etc.) is fine if the child is interested in it (as long as it is in English). For more academic English, students can re-read their textbooks and schoolwork, and focus on academic vocabulary. Guided readers, graded at different levels of English are also available from the EAL department and the school libraries. For EYFS and KS1, Bugs Club also provides online reading resources.

However, reading alone is not enough. In order to use English effectively children should also *produce* language through speaking and writing. It is this that fully embeds the language in the brain and allows students not only to recognise but also to access and use it. There are numerous websites that can be accessed, often for free, (e.g. the British Council Learn English websites <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/> & <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/en/>) to help with independent English study, as well as Bug Club (<https://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk/login>) which allows students to listen to books being read in English and to read independently and answer questions to check comprehension.

There are a number of free apps that students can use on the iPad at home to practice different skills. Your child's EAL teacher will be happy to provide you with an up to date list of apps that are appropriate for your child's age and suitable for their academic needs.



If more formal tuition is required, the Cambridge English Programme at BSG on Saturdays is a good choice. The British School of Guangzhou is a fully licensed 'Cambridge English Language Examination Centre' and is able to offer a range of qualifications to both our primary and secondary students. These are recognised by employers, universities and government bodies around the world. The emphasis is on learning everyday and academic English for use in both work and study, so these tests are particularly useful for students who want to learn English for academic or career purposes. There are four certificates for secondary students: Key English Test (KET), Preliminary English Test (PET), First Certificate in English (FCE) and the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE). We also offer the Cambridge YLE (Young learners) Examinations for our primary students. For more information about this programme please contact the school or the Director of the Cambridge English Programme at shaila.chainani@bsg.org.cn



How to Succeed in EAL

Your support is fundamental to your child's academic success and language development. Your encouragement and involvement in your child's schoolwork will increase their ability to learn a new language. Helping with a child's homework, reading to them and listening to them read, are simple ways to get involved in your child's language learning journey. If English is not your first language, there are other ways to help. Language learning is most effective when children are exposed to as much language as possible in both academic and social contexts. When students listen to English being spoken and practice speaking English to others, they will begin to understand and communicate more effectively. Therefore, exposing your child to as much English as possible outside of school will dramatically help their ability to acquire language and communicate effectively. Helping your child access suitable apps, websites, watch English TV shows or movies, play or interact with other students who are confident speakers of English or visit countries where English is the language are several ways to succeed in EAL outside of the classroom. Success in EAL depends on a number of factors; however support, persistence, hard work and practice will go a long way.

In addition to this, students need to develop to become independent language learners. This means that they cannot simply sit back passively and hope that English will somehow be 'given' to them. They need to be active in their use of English, always seeking out new ways to increase their understanding, practice and improve their current knowledge, and keep their motivation high. EAL teachers are more than happy to discuss with parents and students methods to practice and improve English, but in the end it is the student who has to grasp the challenge and make the efforts to achieve this important goal.







