



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

Policy Holder	EAL Lead
Date Approved	December 2025
Approval	Head of LS and SLT
Date for next review	September 2026

Key definition: 'A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.' (*Department for Education, 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics', June 2024*)

MISSION STATEMENT

Holmewood House School endeavours to ensure that all its pupils using English as an Additional Language (EAL) can access their curriculum and participate in school life. Meeting these aims optimises our students' chances of fulfilling their potential and enjoying their time at Holmewood House, and it delivers our promise to promote equality of opportunity for our pupils.

As a school community, we know ourselves to be enriched by the cultural and linguistic variety represented by our 'EAL learners'. We celebrate bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism - and the roads towards them - as strengths, not weaknesses. We have robust support systems in place for our EAL students and are proactively committed to developing our provision. The school employs an EAL Lead who sits within the Learning Strategies department, whose role it is to oversee EAL provision at the school. Teachers, support staff, parents and guardians work in partnership to support the learning and social needs of the school's EAL pupils.

CONTEXT

At the time of writing, eighteen different languages are known to be spoken either by or in the homes of children at Holmewood House. A small number of our EAL students reside in the UK purely for the purpose of their education, including some boarders.

EAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

In line with High Quality Teaching, it is the responsibility of teachers to appropriately adapt their lessons to cater for all learning needs in their class. This means planning and delivering suitable

adjustments for learners developing EAL where necessary. An outline of the range of strategies which might be employed is too vast for the scope of this policy; some examples include: seating EAL learners at the front of the class or with supportive language role models, providing translations of key vocabulary, using visual aids, allowing extended processing time, asking modified questions and setting adapted tasks, offering a picture-dictionary, scaffolding answers, using speaking and writing frames – etc.

Students who are being considered for, or are in receipt of, EAL intervention are assessed and monitored using a personalised tracker tool (about which, more is written below). This tool suggests teaching strategies appropriate to the language levels of the learner in question. They are available to all teaching staff. An EAL Register, produced every September and updated throughout the year, is also available to staff, which contains quick-access, pertinent background information. Additionally, staff training is offered to develop teaching praxis in line with the latest best practise and research regarding teaching with EAL in the classroom.

Where it is deemed beneficial to the child to receive supplementary, targeted EAL support, this will be offered; see under ‘Resources’, below.

A guidance document outlining our school approach to the use of native languages during the school day is available to all staff. It is a live document, updated in line with regular review and pupil need.

As with every student at Holmewood House, the wellbeing of children using EAL is of paramount importance, and pastoral care is provided through the usual school channels, for example the tutor/tutee relationship and pupil ‘safety circle’. Staff are vigilant in their observations and if any issues arising from EAL are identified, pastoral or academic, the relevant staff are informed and the issue addressed accordingly.

ADMISSIONS, ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

For prospective students from Year 1 to Year 8, background information is collected from families as part of the admissions process. If potential EAL needs are identified, the student is invited to attend an informal English proficiency screening with the EAL Lead alongside their regular admissions interview. This English proficiency assessment takes place either in person or remotely and considers speaking, listening and reading skills. It provides only limited data about a prospective pupil’s English-language skillset but is a gauge of their linguistic suitability for study at the school. Upon arrival, the student is monitored, and richer information is gathered about their English proficiency, access to lesson content and social interactions. Teaching staff observe their EAL students, and, before the October half term, collective staff feedback informs the baseline English language levels for these students across reading, writing, speaking and listening skills – we call this the ‘initial assessment’. Where a student’s English proficiency is proving a barrier to their education, EAL levels and targets are set, and they are recorded using a tracker tool. Moving forward, teaching staff employ appropriate strategies to help students reach their targets.

Throughout the academic year, the tracker tool is used to assess, monitor and review pupil progress and any interventions in place, on a termly basis. The effectiveness of strategies used is also reviewed and evaluated, and informed adjustments are made. The tracker provides a record of the pupil’s progress from an EAL perspective; this means a measure, primarily, of their engagement in classes and school life more broadly, facilitated by the child’s improving English proficiency. It helps to tell us how effectively the child is learning *through* English.

In Nursery and Reception, the same level of background detail is not available at point of admission. As such, during the first few weeks of term teachers of these year groups make careful observations of children known or believed to be using EAL, and the EAL Lead makes observations. Any EAL concerns are discussed, and an appropriate course of remedial action is established where necessary (for example, the use of a tracker and/or intervention).

RESOURCES

The EAL Lead is available to offer intervention for those pupils using EAL who require it. This takes the form of either in-class support, 1:1 sessions or group sessions, depending on need. 1:1 sessions are subject to an extra charge. Students receiving 1:1 support can expect targeted lessons, planned and delivered to develop areas of language which have been identified as posing barriers to the pupil's curriculum access. Parents who wish their children to have 1:1 English-language support, even if the school has not deemed it necessary, can choose to enrol their students for this additional support at a fee.

Where students have their own translation devices, they are permitted and encouraged to use them for precise purposes, and under supervision, during the school day. At the time of writing, the school has one electronic translation device which can be lent to students in need. Bilingual and picture dictionaries are available from the Learning Strategies Department, which may be borrowed for use during lessons, subject to availability.

Both the Learning Hub and the Boarding House are equipped with a selection of texts in the mother-tongue languages of many of our students. Some texts are bilingual. This aids the important maintenance of students' home language(s), as well as making our 'reading for pleasure' ethos more inclusive. The visibility of these texts in school also promotes healthy intercultural curiosity in the school body.

Peer support is provided in the form of student 'buddies' for new EAL students, in line with the school's custom of assigning peer buddies to new pupils.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS

Using EAL can pose challenges at school, but it must not be understood as conveying SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) status on the child. A learner with EAL is not by default a learner with SEND. In some cases, a pupil using EAL will also have SEND. In these scenarios, extra support may be needed both to address the EAL needs and the SEND requirements. In others, no support will be necessary for the former but requisite for the latter. Sometimes, no extra support is needed. Support plans are tailored to each individual child as appropriate.

Where the presenting needs of an EAL pupil might indicate SEND, the child is carefully monitored across their curriculum by teaching staff. If, following this, SEND should be strongly suspected, a referral will be made to the Learning Strategies Department for observation. In conversation with the EAL Lead, this observation should indicate whether the child's presentation is likely to be a result of SEND needs alongside, or even instead of, EAL needs. If necessary, the Learning Strategies Department will then pursue the correct course of action to arrange any recommended assessment and subsequent intervention.

Should EAL students be identified as demonstrating more, or the potential for more, advanced abilities and skills than their peers at any time, proportionate adaptation will be put in place by their teaching staff, as it would be with any student.

PARENTS/CARERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

We endeavour to make information easily accessible to parents and families of our EAL pupils. We want them to feel fully included in the school community and the school life of their child. Many of our EAL students either board or reside during term time with an English-speaking guardian. In these circumstances, English-language communications suffice in the first instance, and we rely on the guardian to act as intermediary, providing interpretation or translation where necessary. If a guardian feels unable to do this, we will follow the same steps as outlined in the following scenario. Where students live at home with parents who speak limited English, every effort will be made to ensure communications are understood, and parents are encouraged to make the school aware should any information need clarifying. We might use the aid of digital translator tools to translate key information or, in extreme circumstances, enlist the help of an interpreter for in-person meetings. School reports can be provided in translation for parents who require this.