BRITANNICA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, SHANGHAI

EAL Policy

(English as an Additional Language)

Updated September 2026

Introduction

Britannica International School is a place of diversity, community and respect. The close-knit, nurturing environment at our school means that all students have the care and support that they need to be effective and happy learners.

At Britannica, we are committed to providing learners with stimulating and high-quality academic and co-curricular learning experiences. We strive to cultivate a passion for learning among our students that will extend beyond their time at Britannica.

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.

Mission, Vision and Values

EAL provision within Britannica is closely linked with the school's vision, mission and guiding statements, with particular focus on:

- Providing an inclusive community, which values the needs of all individuals
- Providing outstanding learning experiences for all students, focused on delivering the best of British education within an international community.
- Promoting independence and high academic achievement through supportive and dedicated mentoring, placing students at the heart of their learning journey.

English as an Additional Language Provision

1. Introduction

EAL at Britannica is defined as per the UK's Department for Education's definition, which states that "a student 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' English Language Proficiency (ELP) can range from complete beginners to those with considerable fluency. Research has shown that EAL students can attain conversational proficiency similar to that of their peers within about two years of exposure to English. However, to reach a grade or peer level of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPS) can require a period of between 5-7 years.[2]

Proficiency in the English language is the major factor influencing the degree and type of support an individual student will need. Students with lower ELP may require EAL specialist language support and intervention if they are to reach their full academic potential in mainstream education.

This policy sets out the school's aims, objectives and strategies with regard to meeting the needs of our EAL students and helping them to achieve their full potential.

2. Aims & Objectives

The key purposes of EAL at Britannica are to allow all students to:

- Learn English language acquisition skills and strategies;

[1] Department for Education, 2020 (link)
[2] Cummins, 2008 (link); Demie & Strand 2006 (link)

- Develop communication skills;
- Acquire and develop English language skills through curriculum focused classes.

It is Britannica's aim to deliver the best opportunities for all learners, including those students whose first language is not English. Students are taught the full curriculum in mainstream classes, with immersion being the primary model to develop language acquisition. This means that learners have full and equal access to the whole curriculum.

The employment of specialist EAL teachers, along with experienced classroom practitioners, means a supportive and purposeful learning environment, focused on developing English language skills, is created. Through continuous collaboration focused and effective teaching and learning strategies are developed to best support EAL learners.

3. Guidelines and Principles

It is recognised that all teachers at Britannica are 'EAL teachers' and the inclusion of language acquisition strategies should be paramount to teaching and learning, across the school.

EAL is continually supported through the following:

- Withdrawal or in class support sessions for students in Year 1 – Year 13 to support language acquisition, with a specialist EAL teacher;
- Continuous communication and collaborative planning with mainstream class teachers and EAL specialist teachers;
- An audit of all students' EAL level completed by mainstream class teachers, at four points across the school year;
- Assessment, monitoring and placement of students within EAL;
- Whole staff inset sessions focused on developing the delivery of EAL across the school;
- Dedicated Teaching Assistants across EYFS – Key Stage 2 classes;
- Key Stage 4 EAL support, as an option, in lieu of extra IGCSE subjects;
- Parent engagement events to develop parental support of students' developing language acquisition;
- Focused professional development for staff members across the year, including the delivery of TESMC to teachers.

4. Teaching and Learning

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

- Develop consistent approaches to teaching and learning, taking into account varying levels of language needs;
- Plan for teaching subject specific vocabulary and terminology;
- Develop engaging reading activities to increase students' reading and writing skills;
- Plan and deliver lessons that have a clear focus on literacy and the building of language skills;
- Promote the use of English in the classroom where appropriate;
- Work collaboratively with specialist EAL teachers in planning and delivering curriculum-based content;
- Complete the EAL audit throughout the year and provide information on those students identified as needing extra levels of support;

- Work collaboratively with the EAL specialist teachers to enhance teaching and learning.
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The role of the EAL specialist teacher is to:

- Support the learning taking place in the mainstream classroom;
- Communicate and collaborate with the classroom teacher in planning EAL withdrawal sessions;
- Plan and deliver engaging language-based lessons that support the wider curriculum;
- Continuously assess students' language acquisition and give judgements on their proficiency;
- Make EAL a key focus of professional development, to ensure most relevant and up-to-date strategies are being employed;
- Provide feedback to the Head of EAL and SLT on the progress of EAL learners;

The role of the Head of EAL is to:

- Monitor the progress of EAL learners, predominantly through the EAL audits throughout the year;
- Oversee the assessment and placement of students into EAL groups;
- Plan for effective and relevant professional development opportunities in the area of EAL;
- Communicate with parents regarding the progress of EAL students, including opportunities for parents to visit school;
- Build and maintain a clear and positive vision of EAL across the school community;
- Provide information on the progress of EAL learners to the SLT and wider school community;
- Support all members of teaching staff in the delivery of EAL across the school.

5. Placement Assessment & Progress Tracking

Entry into the EAL programme is as follows:

Students are screened through:

1. A student profile filled in by parents to show the student's home language and prior language learning experience.

2. Discussion with the class teacher and observations carried out by EAL specialists in the first two weeks of schooling.

3. Initial assessments carried out by the class teacher: standardised tests, determining reading level, writing and phonics.

4. A formative assessment of student's language proficiency using the Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework.[3]

5. Students who fall within certain proficiency bands (below expected grade level) will be further assessed using the WIDA Screener (Grade 1-13/Year 2-12) and Kindergarten (Year 1) assessments.

[3] Bell Foundation Framework link

Further information on EAL student identification and placement is set out within the 'EAL Identification and Placement Guide'.

6. Organisation & Curriculum

The level and type of support offered varies depending on students' individual needs. Students receive in-class and or withdrawal support depending on their proficiency and ability to access curriculum content.

Students will generally follow the curriculum of the mainstream classes they are attending. This is facilitated by EAL targeted support in specific skills and areas, and through the provision of differentiated instruction and or adapted tasks. These lessons run parallel (but outside of) the mainstream English lessons.

Students in years 1-5 also receive an EAL lesson which runs parallel to timetabled topic lessons. During this lesson students are pre-taught difficult or abstract curriculum vocabulary.

Students with beginning or lower language proficiency levels are targeted for phonics, communication, literacy and survival language intervention.

In Secondary school, the support is given through in-class support, as well as specialist EAL classes outside of the mainstream lessons. This largely depends on the student's ability to access the curriculum and the degree of support which they require to complete assigned tasks.

7. FEES:

At Britannica, the provision of EAL support is not included in the current tuition fees for school. EAL fees are charged on a termly basis and are subject to change.