



English for Speakers of Other Languages Policy

This Policy applies to all pupils at Bishop's Stortford College including those in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Department exists as a language support for those pupils whose first language is a language other than English. Our aim is to help pupils achieve their full potential in using English for everyday, social, academic and professional purposes in the four key skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). This support is provided on an individual or group basis by dedicated, professionally trained teachers and forms an integral part of Bishop's Stortford College's curriculum.

The department recognises that traditions and cultural awareness are very important in language acquisition and aims to incorporate these aspects into the teaching programme. We aim to make the experience of learning English as enjoyable as possible. We welcome students from a wide variety of nationalities.

The place of ESOL in the College


The ESOL Department encourages international pupils to integrate into the life of the College as a whole, by helping them to explore issues of cultural interest and by encouraging them to take part in extracurricular activities. The role of the Boarding House is clearly vital as a key facilitator for integrating these pupils with other nationalities: tutor groups are another area where integration can be very successfully worked on. The ESOL Department aims to act as a link between these various parts of the school community.

The teaching of language involves close personal relationships. The ESOL Department is therefore well placed to play an important role in the pastoral care of international pupils. This will act as a back up to the Boarding House staff's work in areas such as initial homesickness, settling into a new way of life, understanding regulations and their importance, etc. In addition, ESOL staff are often in a position to offer advice about academic work, subject choices, study skills, personal statements for UCAS forms, university choices, letters of application and references for overseas universities.

ESOL staff liaise regularly with subject teachers, House Staff and the Deputy Heads across both the Prep & Senior Schools, regarding the progress of individual students. The department strongly believes that this role of supporting the pupils and liaising with members of staff and parents is of vital importance and it is one of

the most effective ways that the department can contribute to the life of the Bishop's Stortford College community as a whole.

Courses provided by the ESOL Department

As pupils enter the school with widely varying competence in the English language, we aim to run courses which are tailored as closely as possible to their needs. Prospective pupils sit a placement test using the online test Password, prior to being admitted to the College.  week to ten days after arrival, pupils also sit the Oxford Placement test Version 2 to check that this score is not too much at variance with the Password Placement test. In addition to this they write a short essay. According to the age and English language capabilities of the child, this test may be adapted, as the main aim is to ensure that the school has the most up-to-date information on the level of the child, to ascertain what support, if any, is required.

Pre-Prep (Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1)

In the Pre-Prep, Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, there are some children who speak different languages and we celebrate this diversity. We want to ensure any child who comes to us speaking English as an additional language is given specific support in class with small group work or individual activities designed to help them become fluent as quickly as possible. We involve the parents and an Individual Education Plan is drawn up, where necessary.


Language Learning

In the Pre-Prep, we ensure children who are already developing one or more languages, are given extra space and time, patience and support. We celebrate the skills they have in their home language, and invite parents to share their home language and cultural background. Parents are invited to provide a list of key words and phrases (or translations of these) to assist the child's transition into Reception. Resources are gathered of key words, phrases and favourite stories, told in the child's home language.

Social Skills

In the Pre-Prep, there is a rich, cultural environment, where play opportunities and books encourage sharing and talking. Children who share the same home language are encouraged to communicate. The teaching is as visual as possible to enable access and create an inclusive learning environment. Teachers use gestures, facial expression and explanatory actions, together with the use of objects to explain each part of an activity. The online journal Tapestry enables a two-way response so families can share home language and developmental experiences such as celebrations, food, festivals. Main festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are celebrated in assemblies and in class.

Beginners/Lower-Intermediate Group

 the Prep School, sometimes pupils are taught on a one-to-one or small group basis by removing them from linguistically challenging subjects, or if they have not studied MFL before using these lessons instead. A relevant tailor-made course is provided according to their particular needs and abilities. The key to teaching these younger Prep School pupils is close liaison with their mainstream English teachers and extra support in class is provided where necessary.

Intermediate Group Pre- IGCSE Course

The lower year groups in the Senior School are taught ESOL in the relevant option block, as determined by their subject choices. Other arrangements are also considered as required by need. . Fourth Form and Lower Fifth pupils can spend any other free periods in their timetable in the Library where they can be given extra ESOL reading or writing activities to do where necessary or, more commonly, they may use this extra time for their other subjects, particularly when these involve using the Library's research facilities.

Pupils entering our **Fourth Form (Year 9)**, at the age of 13/14 years, embark on a pre-IGCSE programme which is carefully structured to boost pupils' abilities and confidence in the subject. This pre-IGCSE course provides a relevant and stimulating foundation course and forms the perfect preparation for the IGCSE course.

It should be stressed that while the main aim of these ESOL classes is to follow the pre-IGCSE course, this is not their sole function. A flexible approach is adopted and often lessons related to the pupils' mainstream English courses are integrated into the timetabled lessons, and extra support may be given with coursework assignments.

Upper Intermediate/Advanced Group IGCSE English as a Second Language Course

Pupils already studying at the College usually embark on the extended level (CIE) IGCSE ESL course at the start of the **Lower Fifth (Year 10)**, taking the exam in May of the Upper Fifth year. They also follow the Edexcel IGCSE English Language and English Literature courses in their mainstream English lessons, and are entered for these exams at the same time. This has proved to be a very effective strategy because pupils who struggle with IGCSE English Language have almost always gained a Grade C or above in IGCSE ESL.

Alternatively, more able students may embark on the Cambridge Advanced CAE course, which, with its focus on accuracy, idiomatic expression and academic skills, is a great pathway for pre-A-Level preparation.

6th Form

Pupils who join the College from abroad in the **Lower Sixth (Year 12)** have already been tested and assessed, and now have the opportunity to study for either the Cambridge IELTS exam or Cambridge Advanced (CAE). These exams assess all four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking and are recognised by all UK universities. At the highest level, students can receive 32 UCAS points for Cambridge Advanced, which is equivalent to an A-Level pass.

Students in **the Upper Sixth (Year 13)**, may continue to prepare for the university entrance qualifications outlined above until such time as they are ready to take the exam they are preparing for.

Sixth Form pupils can also seek help with their UCAS personal statements and university choices. They may also need advice and references for applications to universities in their home countries.