

# OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

*Reception to Year 13 • Independent Specialist SEND Provision*

*“Love thy neighbour as yourself” • “We can make a difference.”*

|                               |                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy date</b>            | September 2026                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Review date</b>            | September 2027 or earlier following a change in law, guidance or school provision                                                                       |
| <b>Proprietor / Principal</b> | Mrs M F Brown                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Policy lead</b>            | Principal / nominated EAL Lead                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Applies to</b>             | Reception to Year 13, including pupils with EAL who also have SEND and/or an EHCP                                                                       |
| <b>School position</b>        | English is the principal language of instruction at Overstone Park School.                                                                              |
| <b>Related policies</b>       | Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Assessment; SEND; Equality; Safeguarding; Admissions; Anti-Bullying; Attendance; Exams/Access Arrangements; Complaints |

### CORE PRINCIPLE

Having English as an additional language is not, by itself, a special educational need or disability. OPS will identify language-learning needs accurately, distinguish them from SEND wherever possible, and provide appropriate support without lowering curriculum expectations.

## **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out how Overstone Park School identifies, assesses, teaches and supports pupils who use or are learning English as an additional language (EAL). It is designed for the school's specialist SEND context and recognises that a pupil may have EAL and SEND simultaneously.

- Ensure every pupil can access a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.
- Develop pupils' spoken English, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary and curriculum language from their individual starting points.
- Value home languages, cultural identity and multilingualism while ensuring pupils develop the English needed to participate fully in school and everyday life in England.
- Ensure EAL does not mask SEND, and SEND is not incorrectly attributed to the normal process of acquiring an additional language.
- Promote equality, belonging, safeguarding, achievement, independence and preparation for adulthood.

## **2. Legal and regulatory framework**

The school will have regard to legislation and current national guidance applicable to independent schools in England, including:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, especially Part 1 (Quality of Education), Part 2 (SMSC), Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety), Part 6 (Provision of Information) and Part 8 (Leadership and Management).
- DfE Independent School Standards Guidance, updated April 2026.
- Equality Act 2010, including the prohibition on unlawful discrimination in admissions and the provision of education, benefits, facilities and services; and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Children and Families Act 2014 where relevant to pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where applicable and as relevant good practice for pupils with EHCPs and specialist SEND provision.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, current statutory guidance.
- Human Rights Act 1998 and relevant principles concerning dignity, family life, religion, expression and non-discrimination.
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework where applicable to pupils in the EYFS.

- Current examination-board and JCQ regulations where EAL pupils are entered for regulated qualifications and access arrangements are considered.

OPS will review this policy whenever relevant legislation, Independent School Standards, safeguarding requirements, examination regulations or DfE guidance changes.

### **3. Independent School Standards and EAL**

The school's EAL arrangements form part of its evidence that the curriculum and teaching meet the Independent School Standards. In particular, leaders must ensure that curriculum planning and teaching take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes, needs and prior attainment and enable pupils to make progress.

English is the principal language of instruction at OPS. The school provides English teaching appropriate to pupils' ages, starting points and needs and develops literacy, speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum.

### **4. Definition and identification**

For school purposes, a pupil may be identified as having EAL where English is not the only or first language used in the pupil's early development/home context and the pupil requires consideration of additional-language development in teaching or assessment. EAL is a broad category: pupils may range from new-to-English to highly fluent multilingual speakers.

- Information will be gathered at admission from parents/carers, previous settings and available records.
- The school will record languages spoken/understood, literacy in home language where known, prior schooling, time in English-medium education and relevant migration/education history where educationally necessary.
- Staff will not assume that conversational fluency means the pupil has mastered the academic language needed for curriculum learning.
- Identification will be reviewed where evidence shows that language is no longer a material barrier to learning.

### **5. Admissions and induction**

- EAL will not be used unlawfully to disadvantage an applicant in admissions.
- At entry, the school will establish the pupil's English-language starting point and any communication, SEND, sensory, medical or safeguarding factors relevant to successful placement.
- New pupils will receive an accessible induction using visual information, modelling, AAC, translation/interpreting support or other communication support where appropriate.

- Parents/carers will be given important school information in an accessible way where reasonably practicable and necessary for meaningful communication.

## 6. Baseline and ongoing assessment

Assessment must establish what the pupil knows and can do, not merely how much English the pupil can currently express.

- Assess listening/understanding, spoken interaction, reading, writing and curriculum vocabulary at an appropriate level.
- Use observations, work scrutiny, curriculum assessments, previous records and parent/pupil information.
- Where practicable, consider evidence of the pupil's knowledge and literacy in their first/ home language.
- Track progress from baseline at least termly where EAL remains a material learning need.
- Use assessment findings to adapt teaching and identify targeted intervention.
- Avoid relying on a single English-language test to conclude that a pupil has SEND.

## 7. EAL and SEND: avoiding misidentification

EAL is not a category of SEND. However, an EAL pupil may also have autism, speech/ language and communication needs, dyslexia, cognition and learning needs, sensory needs, social/emotional needs or another disability/SEND.

| Consider              | Possible EAL indicator                                           | Possible SEND/other indicator requiring investigation                             |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pattern of difficulty | Difficulty mainly where English demand is high                   | Difficulty also evident in home language/non-verbal tasks or across contexts      |
| Progress              | Progress with exposure, modelling and explicit language teaching | Limited/atypical progress despite appropriate language support                    |
| Communication         | Errors consistent with acquiring English                         | Persistent communication profile not explained by additional-language acquisition |
| History               | Interrupted/limited English-medium schooling                     | Developmental/medical/ educational evidence suggesting an additional need         |

These are prompts, not diagnostic rules. Where concerns remain, OPS will use its graduated SEND processes, seek specialist advice where appropriate and consider the pupil's EHCP and professional reports.

## **8. Teaching and curriculum access**

- Maintain ambitious, age-appropriate curriculum entitlement while scaffolding the language required to access it.
- Teach key vocabulary explicitly before, during and after learning.
- Use visuals, objects, demonstrations, worked examples, gestures, symbols, dual coding and clear routines.
- Chunk instructions and check understanding rather than asking only 'Do you understand?'.
- Provide sentence stems, writing frames, word banks, model texts and structured opportunities for oral rehearsal.
- Use peer interaction carefully and positively; do not make another child routinely responsible for interpreting.
- Allow additional processing time and opportunities to rehearse responses.
- Teach subject-specific academic language across English, mathematics, science, humanities, vocational subjects and preparation for adulthood.
- Use systematic synthetic phonics for pupils at the early stages of learning to read where appropriate to their reading development.
- Use TEACCH structures, visual timetables, AAC and individual communication systems consistently where these are part of a pupil's SEND provision.

## **9. Home language and translation**

OPS values pupils' home languages. Staff should not instruct families to stop using a secure home language. A strong home-language environment can support communication, identity and family relationships.

- Translation and interpreting may be used for essential parent communication, safeguarding, admissions, healthcare, reviews and other significant matters where needed.
- Machine translation may support routine communication but should not be relied upon without appropriate checking for high-stakes safeguarding, medical, legal or complex SEND information.
- Pupils should not normally be used to interpret sensitive, confidential, safeguarding or complex professional discussions for adults.

## **10. Safeguarding pupils with EAL**

Limited English can make it harder for a pupil to disclose harm, understand safety information or be understood accurately. Safeguarding procedures therefore take priority over ordinary language-support arrangements.

- Staff will use communication methods the pupil can understand, including AAC, visuals and appropriate interpreting where necessary.
- Staff must not dismiss unusual language, silence, inconsistent accounts or difficulty describing an event simply as an EAL issue.
- Professional interpreters should be considered for significant safeguarding discussions where language could impede accurate communication.
- Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the school's Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff will remain alert to bullying, racism, xenophobia, exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, forced marriage, FGM and other safeguarding risks where relevant, without stereotyping pupils or families.

## **11. Equality, discrimination and bullying**

Race under the Equality Act includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. OPS will not tolerate racist or xenophobic bullying, harassment or discriminatory treatment. Language, accent or nationality must not be used as a basis for humiliation or lowered expectations.

Where an EAL pupil is also disabled, reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

## **12. EYFS**

Where the EYFS applies, staff will support children to develop communication and language effectively, recognising their home language and developmental stage. Assessment will distinguish, as far as reasonably possible, between learning English as an additional language and concerns about communication/development that may require further assessment.

## **13. Assessment, qualifications and access arrangements**

- Teachers will assess curriculum knowledge as fairly as possible and avoid confusing limited English expression with lack of subject understanding.
- Normal classroom scaffolding should enable learning without invalidating the skill being assessed.
- Formal examination access arrangements will only be provided where permitted by the relevant awarding body/JCQ regulations and supported by the required evidence.

- EAL alone does not automatically entitle a pupil to SEND provision or an examination access arrangement.
- For Years 10-13, leaders will consider language demands when planning GCSE, Functional Skills, Entry Level and vocational pathways while maintaining suitable ambition.

#### **14. Attendance, behaviour and pastoral support**

Staff will consider whether language misunderstanding, cultural transition, communication anxiety or difficulty understanding routines contributed to an incident, while maintaining clear behavioural expectations. Sanctions must not discriminate unlawfully. Persistent attendance or behaviour concerns will be addressed through the school's normal safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and SEND systems, with language support where relevant.

#### **15. Roles and responsibilities**

##### **Proprietor / Principal**

- Ensure the policy is implemented effectively and resourced appropriately.
- Ensure leaders understand EAL within the Independent School Standards, equality and safeguarding framework.
- Monitor curriculum access, progress and any patterns of inequality or underachievement.

##### **EAL Lead / nominated leader**

- Maintain an overview of identified EAL pupils and their provision.
- Support baseline assessment, target setting and progress review.
- Advise teachers on strategies and coordinate interpreting/translation where necessary.
- Provide or arrange staff development and report to senior leadership.

##### **Teachers and support staff**

- Know pupils' language and communication needs.
- Plan explicit language support within subject teaching.
- Use assessment to adapt teaching and report concerns about progress or safeguarding.
- Implement SEND/EHCP strategies alongside EAL strategies where both apply.

##### **SENCO / SEND leadership**

- Work with the EAL Lead to distinguish additional-language development from SEND.
- Ensure pupils with both EAL and SEND receive their specified provision and appropriate reasonable adjustments.

- Seek specialist assessment/advice where evidence indicates needs beyond EAL.

#### 16. Parent/carer partnership and pupil voice

- Parents/carers will be encouraged to share information about language use, previous education, strengths and communication needs.
- Key meetings will be made accessible through appropriate communication support where needed.
- Pupils will be asked about what helps them understand, communicate and participate.
- Home language and cultural knowledge will be treated respectfully and used positively where appropriate.

#### 17. Monitoring, impact and proprietor oversight

OPS will evidence not only that this policy exists, but that it is implemented and has impact.

| Policy / Intent                           | Implementation evidence                                                                                  | Impact evidence                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EAL policy; curriculum; equality; SEND    | Admission information; baselines; EAL profiles; planning; visual supports; interventions; staff training | Termly progress; work; reading/language gains; curriculum participation; qualifications; destinations |
| Safeguarding and accessible communication | Interpreter records where appropriate; DSL records; translated/accessibly communicated information       | Pupils can communicate concerns and understand key safety information                                 |
| High expectations and inclusion           | Lesson visits; teacher adaptations; assessment records                                                   | Reduced language barriers; increased independence and participation                                   |

Leadership will review EAL provision at least termly where there are pupils requiring material EAL support. The Proprietor/Principal will receive assurance on identified needs, progress, curriculum access, safeguarding/equality issues, staff training and actions required.

#### 18. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and earlier where legislation, statutory guidance, Independent School Standards, inspection requirements or the needs of the school population change.

#### Key authoritative sources

- **DfE, Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-independent-schools>

- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents>
- **Equality Act 2010:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- **DfE, Equality Act 2010: advice for schools:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>
- **DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

**Approved by Proprietor/Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Marion Brown \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 23/08/23 revised and updated. \_\_\_\_\_

Next review: September 2027