

La Côte International School



English Language Learning Policy

Revised: January 2010

This policy is designed to set out the principles and practice of the teaching and acquisition of the English language at the La Côte International School.

English language learners are pupils whose native language is not English. At La Côte International School we believe that all children are entitled to the same quality and access to the curriculum and show no ethnic or cultural bias.

English Language Learners at LCIS

Pupils arrive at LCIS from a variety of different language and literacy backgrounds. Some will already have had exposure to the English language while others may have previously had little or none.

The majority of families move to Switzerland for a limited period, usually up to a maximum of three years, and demonstrate a transient lifestyle. Often these families choose to continue their children's education in English in another country or within their homeland when they move on from LCIS. It is important to be sympathetic to the needs of each family and offer the best possible opportunities for each child whatever the families' circumstances.

Principles of English Language Learning

At LCIS we believe that all languages spoken in school should be celebrated and opportunities used to create links in learning both in school and with home. Multilingualism will always be celebrated as an educationally enriching achievement.

The acquisition of English is best provided for in a natural learning context; in the mainstream classroom and in the wider school environment and that more focused lessons play a part in supporting the other learning opportunities.

We recognise that an exposure to English without explicit teaching will not usually be sufficient to ensure continued progress beyond the early stages of language acquisition, which is often based around social interaction. At LCIS the aim is to provide its pupils with the language tools which will allow them to access the curriculum, in order to acquire facts and knowledge, and to encourage fundamental skills and processes. The emphasis is to develop the language associated with higher order

thinking skills such as hypothesizing, evaluating, inferring and generalizing.

The support offered through the English Language Learning teacher is targeted to support pupils to be able to access all areas of the English National Curriculum and celebrate their full academic potential.

The support children need to fully access the curriculum is constantly changing and therefore the progress of all ELL pupils will be monitored in class and by the ELL teacher to help assess the future needs of each individual child.

At LCIS we recognise that language learning occurs through:

- repetition of key language;
- experimentation within different elements of English language;
- positive reinforcement within all situations and levels;
- exposure to a rich English language environment;
- creating positive opportunities to communicate.

Practice of English Language Learning

Children throughout the school are supported upon arrival at ISM and their needs are constantly reviewed and monitored.

Planning the ELL curriculum

The teaching and learning opportunities in ELL activities are based on the English National Curriculum. The pupil's individual needs and areas of concern will be determined following discussion with the class teacher and the subsequent planning will aim to improve the understanding and use of English to meet the level of the majority of the class. The National Literacy Strategy objectives and progression are used for planning. Topics are chosen based on language needs and in order to support and reinforce class work and gaps in previous learning.

It is important to remember that all pupils have individual educational needs but in addition to this, pupils learning English also have language learning needs.

Organising ELL provision

Ideally any language is best taught in a meaningful context through class based and wider school activities. However the ELL pupils also require

small group context that offers a more focused and intensive learning environment.

Small group activities are organised through the withdrawal of individual pupils. Generally they would receive support during their class's literacy lessons. For some children who are new to English, it could be the case that, initially, another new language would be of less benefit than developing further confidence in English. In such cases, pupils who require ELL support may be withdrawn from French lessons. This decision is by no means definitive and at an agreed point the ELL teacher, together with the class teacher and the senior management staff, will decide upon a suitable point for the pupil to progress from an ELL environment to French classes, at least for some of the sessions. The decision to offer and withdraw ELL support lessons is continuously monitored and reviewed. Children will continue to be supported and/or monitored as they develop their English language skills.

The ELL specialist teacher will support the pupils at all levels and will liaise closely with the class teacher at all times to ensure that language learning needs are constantly met.

English Language Learning Activities

We aim to provide a positive teaching environment where the English language can be taught and reinforced in a focused way. All activities use a range of teaching and learning strategies and resources to offer a variety of learning experiences. Activities use a variety of techniques including visual cues, cassettes, word/letter banks, multicultural texts and ICT games.

At LCIS we always aim to provide models of the use of fluent English language and a flexible teaching environment tailored to the individual needs of all pupils including English Language Learners. As appropriate, particularly for new arrivals at school, children may be paired up with other speakers of their home language for some explanations and activities.

English Language Learning across the school

The support for the language acquisition of English looks different in different Key Stages in the school.

Foundation Stage

Children learn language through play and planned group activities in a natural way. We recognise, celebrate and promote children's home language and mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to continue to promote and use their home language with their children and reinforce vocabulary and concepts acquired at school through their mother tongue. Children who enter the school with English as an additional language are immersed in an English-speaking environment and their language develops through modelling and everyday language opportunities, particularly through play. Specific teaching of key vocabulary and modelling of good language is taught as appropriate within the context of other learning.

Key Stage One and Two

Throughout Key Stage One and Two we recognise that children learn language through play and planned group activities in a natural way. We recognise, celebrate and promote children's home language and mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to continue to promote and use their home language with their children and reinforce vocabulary and concepts acquired at school through their mother tongue. English language learners are immersed in an English-speaking environment and their language develops through modelling and everyday language opportunities.

In addition, children are taken to a specialised ELL room and supported through small group teaching of English on a regular basis during the week to reinforce other learning that occurs in school. Specific teaching of key vocabulary and modelling of good language is taught as appropriate within the context of other learning and the ELL teacher works closely alongside the class teacher to best meet the specific needs of each child to enable them to fully access the curriculum.

Assessment

An initial assessment is made, with a referral form from the class teacher, when a new ELL pupil arrives at LCIS. The teacher will define the origin of the pupil, family background and their level of language and academic achievement, both in their mother tongue and in English.

Stages of language acquisition are used to help understand the levels of development and therefore where to focus teaching and learning. These

are attached as an appendix.

Once a child is receiving ELL lessons, they are informally assessed on a regular basis using a range of activities to identify areas of achievement and concern. All assessment recognises and is sympathetic towards the age and abilities of the pupil and is reproduced in a meaningful format which can easily be transmitted to other members of staff.

It is recognised that some subjects are more cognitively demanding and that linguistic support, including awareness of the value of home language, will aid the child to gain a conceptual or cognitive understanding and be less hindered by language.

When assessing an ELL pupil, consideration is taken of the following factors:

- Special consideration is taken towards the ELL pupil with regard to the annual standardised school assessments. ELL pupils may have the opportunity to sit all or part of these assessment tests. In some cases these tests are not applicable to the pupil, particularly if they have little or no written/spoken English. It is important to remember that the test scores do not always reflect the full potential of an ELL pupil and should not be used as the main criteria for placing pupils in a particular teaching group.
- ELL pupils can make rapid progress in the acquisition of English at least on an informal level. However it needs to be recognised to be able to function fully and be competent, particularly at an academic level will require a sustained period of time.
- Special consideration is taken when an ELL pupil has special needs. It is important to recognise what the pupil can do and reward all achievement based upon a range of evidence and to separate the different needs that a child has and consequently work towards an approach that successfully meets the child's particular needs.
- The parents are updated at regular intervals and are therefore able to support activities within the home environment as well as developing a positive dialogue with staff who are involved in teaching their children.

The role of the English Language Learning Teacher

- Work alongside class teachers to observe pupils in different learning contexts in order to understand their language learning needs.
- Work in constant partnership with class teacher to contribute to assessment and evaluation of appropriate planning, delivery and support for ELL pupils.
- Work with individual pupils and small groups to offer targeted support to the children to give them the language opportunities to develop fluency and confidence in other learning contexts.
- Liaise closely with class teachers and the Senior Management team to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and constantly review provision of that support.
- Work alongside others in school to promote and celebrate achievement, multilingualism and different nationalities and languages.

Appendix One: The Stages of Oral Language Acquisition

The children's acquisition of oral English tends to develop as outlined in the stages below as developed by the Northern Association of Support Services for Equality and Assessment (NASSEA).

Stage One: Initial

- May go through a silent period.
- Uses non-verbal responses such as gestures to indicate meaning.
- Uses single words within a clear context, with some formulaic expressions.
- May comprehend instructions where there are strong contextual clues or where they are part of a familiar routine.

Stage Two: Emergent

- Beginning to join in conversation and make some contributions in class.
- Beginning to form simple questions.
- Can generate own sentences of 2-3 word utterances.
- Restricted vocabulary is used creatively to communicate meanings.
- May demonstrate common grammatical structures for familiar social contexts.
- Understands simple instructions relying heavily on visual cues.

Stage Three: Consolidating

- Showing signs of a growing repertoire of extended phrases or simple sentences in the context of a range of curriculum activities.
- Can engage in a simple dialogue or conversation within a learning context.
- Beginning able to produce chunks of organised speech.
- Understands a general instruction by the teacher in a familiar context.
- Can use the tense system to express differences in time.

Stage Four: Competent

- Shows control of functional use of language in most classroom contexts.

- Uses language appropriately across the curriculum for different academic purposes albeit with some surface errors.
- Participates as an active speaker and listener in a group task.
- Understands most social and general school interactions delivered at a normal speed.

Stage Five: Fluent

- Has a range of oral language skills necessary to participate fully and achieve on parity with their peers.

Appendix Two: Referral Form for English Language Learning Support

Name of child: _____

Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Language(s) spoken at home: _____

Does this child have any special needs? YES/NO
If so, please describe:

Please mark the child's current level of English:

- no understanding of English
- understands basic words and phrases but very little spoken
- basic spoken and comprehension
- basic spoken, comprehension, reading and writing
- good in most areas of English
- good in all areas of English but needs to improve grammar

General comments:

Teacher: _____ Date: _____