

Leigh Academy Wilmington

Language Acquisition Policy 2024-25

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Philosophy

As an IB World School Leigh Academy Wilmington recognises that language is integral to “the education of the whole person”, promoting personal and intellectual growth through exploration of cultural identity (aided by the study of at least two languages) within a context of active and deepening intercultural understanding.

The School’s curriculum is designed to implement fully the IBO mission statements, in accordance with the principles enshrined both in its own published educational philosophy and objectives, and in IB documentation governing delivery of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Careers Programme (CP). In relation to language-acquisition, linguistic development and literary understanding, these practices are rooted in an awareness that, as well as being the main medium of social communication, language-skills are tightly linked to cognitive growth, since they are the means by which meaning and knowledge are negotiated, constructed and shared.

In recognising that language is central to learning, the Academy acknowledges that all teachers are, in practice, language-teachers, with responsibilities in facilitating communication.

In addition, the Academy believes that it is essential for all to have a strong foundation in one’s own language (mother tongue), and therefore encourages and supports this development, wherever possible, through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of linguistic diversity within a genuinely international community. The students at the academy are predominantly English speaking (93%) with a small population speaking a variety of other languages (including, but not limited to Chinese, Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, Romanian and Russian) as their mother tongue. Students’ mother tongue is entered into the database and is available to all teachers and staff. The linguistic ability and cultural identity of these students are celebrated and where possible, students are entered for external examinations in their mother tongue.

At Leigh Academy Wilmington in all aspects of our language teaching we strive to:

- Promote enquiry based authentic language development.
- Focus on the trans-disciplinary nature of language development.
- Develop and inter-relate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy.
- Promote consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of language.
- Provide appropriate feedback to support learning languages.
- Integrate language learning with interdisciplinary planning.
- Develop and promote cultural awareness and understanding.
- Develop lifelong learners.

IB Careers Programme:

- We will provide stimulating opportunities for language learning as set out in the language element of the IBCP.
- We will ensure that well-resourced teaching and learning is used to support mother tongue development.

Definitions

In **Languages A (Language & Literature)**, English is the language of instruction and is taught through Literature and Language. The emphasis is on the study of literary and (where relevant or appropriate) non-literary texts and on the development of mature powers of appreciation and analysis, as well as the ability to convey these effectively in speech and writing. Other forms of writing – creative, expository – are fostered and assigned, as integral elements in a balanced Language Arts curriculum, complementing studies in the main literary genres. As well as becoming acquainted with a range of major authors, which covers different epochs and (where applicable) the various countries where that language is spoken, students in each Language A are required to read works of World Literature in Translation, to develop international-mindedness through comparative literary studies.

In **Languages B (French & Spanish)**, students learn at least one language at Key Stage 3, in addition to their mother tongue. The vast majority of students will also continue to study a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4. The emphasis is on transactional linguistic competence and cultural studies. The Academy maintains a positive and stimulating environment for language-learning, and provides a varied, personalized approach, integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as direct contact with other countries through trips, exchanges and written communication. As part of the pastoral programme, all students in Years 7-11 study the language and culture of another country as part of their enrichment entitlement and this is not examined.

All students participating in the MYP study at least two languages: a Language A and one other language. For language B, the National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy (NCELP) programme is followed in KS3 with a focus on phonics, vocabulary and grammar. Within the CP course students must study at least one language. Exceptions to this policy are made for ESL students and/or those students who require additional English support. Such students will be required to take a specially designed ESL course and, if deemed appropriate, to audit English A classes until such time as their English proficiency allows them to access the whole curriculum in a meaningful way. Language combinations are arranged according to the needs of the student and the availability of language teachers in the target languages.

Language provision

First Language: English

As the Academy's Language of Instruction and the language of the host country, all students are required to take courses each year in English, either as Language A (mother-tongue speakers and functional bilinguals) or Language B (second language). Students who, on entering the Academy, have limited competence in English are given additional initial language support (schedule permitting) to enable them to learn effectively and confidently in their other subjects as soon as possible. Staff are provided with opportunities to learn about language-learning and language-teaching as part of the School's CPD; classroom teachers are, thus, aware of ESL students' needs, and modify or differentiate lessons accordingly. In this way students are enabled to achieve competency in meeting academic goals, and to participate fully in the Academy culture, thereby becoming integrated members of the Wilmington community.

Mother-tongue instruction or support in other First Languages (Languages A) - the Academy actively seeks to support the mother-tongue development of its students, and in fulfillment of this commitment is able to offer scheduled Language A courses in a number of languages other than English. Mother Tongue is also supported through Saturday school sessions across our Trust schools within the local community. The Academy works to involve parents when possible in planning their children's language profile and development, and as a community resource.

Second Languages

All students (except a very small group, those acquiring minimum functional competence in English B, as a temporary arrangement) are required to take a second language. As well as the obvious practical benefits, the intrinsic value of studying a language other than one's mother-tongue is that doing so enables a student to discover another culture at first hand, and so acquire another "window on the world".

MYP Language and Literature

Language A will be English and the second language will normally be French or Spanish. Students who are bilingual, or nearly so may opt for a second Language A (instead of a Language B). Where applicable, or when numbers warrant, the Academy may employ a part-time tutor on a yearly basis to support students with their learning. Students are encouraged to take formal examinations in their mother-tongue/other spoken languages and provided with support where possible. This is delivered one-on-one or in small groups.

EAL Provision within the MYP

Students entering Leigh Academy Wilmington with limited proficiency in English receive appropriate additional support within the curriculum. English as an additional language students (EAL) are provided with one-to-one and small group support to develop their English acquisition skills and have unlimited access to programmes such as Rosetta Stone to assist their independent work.

EAL students follow a full programme in all required subjects. [Exception: by being temporarily withdrawn from pursuing other language-options, enabling them to concentrate on achieving as soon as possible the level of functional competence in English needed to facilitate satisfactory learning in their “non-language” subjects, which are all taught through the medium of English.]

When a student is in transition from EAL/Eng B to English A, they may – for a limited period – take both EAL and English A courses. During this transitional period, they may be dispensed from pursuing other language-options.

Teachers within the EAL Department monitor the progress of EAL/English B students on a weekly basis, through meetings and conversations with other subject teachers. Students transition from English B to English A on a flexible and reactive basis at any point in the academic year and always in conjunction with the students themselves, their parents and their teachers.

Language teaching

All teachers are teachers of language, and as such model and uphold good standards of language use.

All languages (MYP Languages A and B; DP Languages A and B; CP Core Language and Cultural Studies) are taught by qualified speakers of the languages.

Language plays a key role in interdisciplinary learning, and the Academy’s various departments of languages (English A; EAL/English B; Modern Languages) are ideally placed to play an active part in developing, designing and discovering valid cross-curricular links aimed at empowering students’ intellectual growth.

Responsibilities and roles

Area of responsibility	Position(s) responsible
The taught language curriculum	DoL for English; literacy coordinator, class teachers
Placement in language classes	DoL for MFL, IBCP Coordinator, Head of P16
Identification for EAL support	SEN Coordinator
Profiling of new admissions	SEN Coordinator
Review of language policy	Senior Leadership Team, IBCP Coordinator
Home Languages opportunities	Language teacher with responsibility for Home Languages

Resources

The teaching of languages is supported by a wide range of audio-visual resources and the Library's print holdings and online facilities. Instructional methods are enhanced by the deployment of appropriate and effective ICT resources. Student-led assemblies provide regular opportunities for all students to become confident communicators to a large audience. Participation in drama productions allow them to fully experience the expressive beauty and power of language skillfully used and students come to appreciate the vital role of language as the major vehicle for thought and expression in their everyday lived reality. The Academy celebrates diversity in all its forms through the delivered curriculum, extra-curricular and co-curricular programmes, as well as our SMSC programmes.