



**GEORGE
SALTER
ACADEMY**

Languages Policy

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Language Policy

A) Overview

Introduction

The command of language is vital to a good education, life-long learning and a happy, productive life. Language is also central to every individual's identity. Therefore, this single policy will incorporate the Academy's approach to English as an Additional Language (EAL) since both home and additional languages are to be valued.

George Salter Academy has a long-standing inclusive ethos which celebrates diversity: 'One World in One School'. Equality is also important; all students, including EAL students, are entitled to the full National Curriculum programmes of study and therefore all teachers have a responsibility for teaching English as well as other subject content. However limited, targeted withdrawal from lessons to allow bespoke support (such as one-to-one coaching or work in small groups) is a useful strategy, especially for Newly Arrived Pupils (NAPs).

The Academy is committed to all students, including EAL students, having a confident command of language and acquiring the English language skills they need to be able to fulfill their academic potential. Some groups of students, which may include newly arrived pupils, will require support to establish positive relationships with both peers and adults.

Context

West Bromwich is a diverse community due to its geography and history. It is on the industrial outskirts of Birmingham and various immigrant communities have settled in the area over several generations. The Academy is reflective of this: 47% of students are defined as EAL – that is, "pupils who use or have access to more than one language at home... it does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all languages" (DfES, 2003).

There are more than 20 different languages which George Salter students consider their 'home' language. English (53%), Bengali (14%) and Panjabi (13%) are by far the most common, with no other language representing more than 6% of the school population.

The reading ages of students upon entry are consistently below the national average. The average Year 7 student enters the Academy with a reading age of 9 years and 9 months. This is around the 42nd percentile nationally.

Key Principles

Literacy is the key component of accessing a good education. Reading is often considered the principal factor (i.e. *a reading age of 9 being required to access the secondary curriculum*), although writing (including handwriting), speaking & listening and groupwork ('oral literacy') are also vital aspects, identified by experts such as Geoff Barton and Mike Gershon.

All teachers should have a clear focus on planning for, and marking for, literacy as well as other subject content. The classroom is where most progress will be made: *'Standards are raised ONLY by changes... in classrooms.'* (Black/William)

Labelling a student as EAL isn't useful in itself. Because the local community has many second- and third-generation immigrant families, many EAL students may be comfortably bi-lingual. In fact, EAL students at the Academy tend to outperform native speakers in terms of attainment & progress. Nevertheless, it is good practice to support these students with their academic language and wider reading.

Newly Arrived Pupils are often (though not always) the students in need of focused support, both academically and socially. Upon arrival, NAPs should be assessed initially in the student's own language if possible. A peer 'buddy' should be assigned to aid socialisation.

B) General Literacy Strategy

There are many strands to the Academy's drive to improve students' literacy. The following is a summary of the Academy's systems and expectations.

1. Definition & Expectations

Literacy is defined as how a student communicates – it is not just reading and writing but also speaking and listening (oral literacy). Every teacher is a teacher of literacy alongside their subject specialism. They are expected to support their students' literacy in their lessons by providing opportunities to develop their skills, as well as giving specific feedback (including marking for literacy).

2. Whole-School Systems

- All staff at KS3 & 4 should mark for basic literacy using the Literacy Marking Symbols and a copy should be in every student's book **or** planner. There is an accompanying guidance sheet for staff to support their use of literacy marking symbols. *In place since 2013/4.*
- All staff should reinforce expectations for the presentation of written work ('Six steps to the perfect Literacy Layout'); teachers should ensure a copy is visible in their classrooms and their marking should reinforce these expectations. *In place since 2013/4.*
- Each department or faculty has developed expectations for written work in their subject; staff should ensure this poster is visible in the classroom, and it is good practice to refer to these expectations as appropriate in the marking of written work. *Developed 2014/5.*
- Each department or faculty also has expectations for speaking and listening in their subject; staff should ensure these posters are visible in the classroom, and it is good practice to refer to them as appropriate in lessons. *Developed 2014/5.*
- Each year the Academy will distribute centrally-set literacy targets for the new cohort (Year 7) to assist teachers' initial marking for literacy; marking should therefore refer to these targets. Teachers should ensure students' individualised targets are stuck in their books (at least for their first book of the year). *In place since 2013/4.*

3. Suggested Environmental Resources

All classrooms (excluding workrooms) in the Post-16 Centre have 'Literacy Key' resources as a wall display. These are resources which support marking for literacy and encourage students to self- and peer-assess their literacy. Though not compulsory, use of these resources are good practice for all Key Stages. 'Literacy Keys' were distributed to all staff with their own classrooms in September 2015, with follow-up staff training on how to use these resources, and positive student response from a trial group.

4. Scheme of Work Requirements

- All schemes of work should identify key vocabulary for that topic or area. It is good practice to explicitly teach these spellings and meanings in context. In dedicated classrooms, it may be useful to have them on display.
- All schemes of work should provide opportunities for reading, ideally both in class and as homework ('flipped learning' may be an option).
- All schemes of work should provide opportunities for extended writing.

5. Supporting Reading

Teachers are role models and opportunities to encourage reading should be taken where possible.

- It is good practice for staff should have a 'favourite read' poster in their classroom or on their office door. *In place since 2013/4.*
- Please take advantage of the library as a resource, both for physical books and e-books, which are cost effective and can be ordered through the Academy librarian. *E-books developed 2014/5.*
- GSA use the Accelerated Reader programme at KS3 (and for Y9 & 10 SEN sets) to support reading. As a form tutor, you can support this by insisting that students 1) have their Accelerated Reader in their bag each day, 2) they read this book during form time (one morning per week is dedicated to it) and at home, and 3) are encouraged to take 'tests' in the library in their own time. *In place since 2010*

6. Literacy Reps

Each department or faculty should nominate a member of staff as literacy rep. Meetings take place termly at least termly. GSA literacy reps have been incredibly productive over the years – helping to develop much of what is described in this document.

7. Staff CPD

It is good practice to offer regular development opportunities for the teaching and learning of literacy. The Literacy and EAL Co-Ordinators should endeavour to offer at least one literacy-related, and one EAL-

related, training session in each Academy CPD cycle. NQTs should receive additional support for the teaching and learning of literacy and EAL as part of their development programme.

8. Community Links

We have a partnership with West Bromwich Central Library who are committed to stocking our key texts, such as course books, textbooks and reference guides in all subjects, as a way of supporting young people in the area. *Developed 2014/5.*

Please contact MDY for further details or support on any of the above.

C) EAL and NAP Considerations

Summary

Students who are newly arrived in the UK (NAPs) and upon initial assessment are found to be in the early stages of developing English will receive specialist small-group English coaching and may have an adapted timetable to facilitate this. However, all students are entitled to the full National Curriculum programmes of study and therefore the vast majority of learning is accommodated in mainstream lessons, although resources may be personalised (see below). Newly Arrived Pupils' language development benefits hugely from this exposure to conversational English. Therefore, all teachers have a responsibility for teaching English as well as other subject content.

All teaching staff receive EAL training and there is a dedicated EAL Co-Ordinator who oversees the progress of EAL students. Students with EAL feel as much a part of the Academy community as any other student at GSA and frequently achieve phenomenal results. Newly Arrived Pupils feel supported and included.

Additional Key Points

- The EAL label alone isn't useful. Many students may be comfortably bi-lingual. However such students still require support with the demands of academic language and their wider reading.
- Assess NAPs initially in the student's own language if possible. Assign a peer 'buddy' to aid socialisation.
- Assume a student is academically able until there is evidence otherwise – at GSA NAPs tend to be placed in "North" (ie our academically able sets) until we gather information on them. To make this work, we aren't afraid to 'get it wrong' and it isn't uncommon to re-set in the first few weeks as assessments come in.
- In addition to the previous two points, staff involved in admissions should follow the Academy's *EAL Induction & Inclusion Process* outlined in the document of that name.

The Role of the EAL Co-Ordinator

The EAL Co-Ordinator liaises with the admissions team and organises the NAP coaching timetable. This is delivered by a specialist LSA, whose training is overseen by the EAL Co-Ordinator. They provide resources and advice for the teaching of EAL students, contributing to the training of staff on EAL issues.

In conjunction with the specialist 'EAL / NAP' LSA, they maintain the central record of assessments which monitor EAL students' acquisition of English. At present the LEA's 'Steps' assessment framework is used although, with assistance from our partners at the Bell Foundation, we aim to adopt the national EAL assessment framework in due course.

Support for NAPs

For students in the early stages of developing English (typically Newly Arrived Pupils) a specialist LSA delivers one-to-one or small-group language coaching sessions. For these sessions, it is good practice to withdraw only from subjects without high social interaction, unless unavoidable. Students are typically withdrawn from one or two lessons per week, although additional learning opportunities, such as flexible learning time and summer school, may also be taken.

Wherever possible the specialist LSA will, in conjunction with the EAL Co-ordinator, plan work which broadly approximates the content being delivered in the lesson that the student has been withdrawn from, e.g. Geography. However, NAPs often benefit from cultural as well as linguistic immersion and consideration will be given to setting work which supports cultural and social understanding of the United Kingdom.

EAL students in mainstream lessons

The best, and most sustainable, practice is for teaching staff to differentiate work for EAL students themselves, after advice and guidance from the EAL Co-Ordinator, who will share exemplar work. Occasionally the EAL Co-Ordinator may directly cooperate with a department in developing EAL resources or a differentiated scheme of work.

In almost all circumstances EAL students should follow the same courses of study as the rest of the class, although occasionally there may be a good reason for a student to complete different work (for example, in a subject which is not continuing if an NAP joins at towards the end of the academic year). In that case, the EAL Co-Ordinator's opinion should be sought.

Developing Academic Language

Teachers can't assume that students understand academic language even if it's the student's home language, or where EAL students seem comfortably bi-lingual. We have to teach and model these terms.

Academic language may include subject-specific terminology, more advanced vocabulary and exam-style 'command words' such as: analyse, argue, describe, explain, evaluate, interpret and compare.

Good practice may include:

- Using visual prompts
- Giving students access to word definition
- Suggesting alternatives (synonyms)
- Use acronyms
- Model responses (exam boards have lots of resources) and where possible use the work of students

All students in a class will benefit from a specific focus on academic language.

D) Pastoral Considerations

As this is a language policy, further details on pastoral support generally, and especially for EAL, NAP and other students with low literacy, can be found in the relevant pastoral and SEN policies. However, three key principles are relevant to this document:

- Admissions and Setting: the Academy will provide a welcoming admission process, involving home-language support where possible. NAPs will have a 'buddy' assigned and the EAL Co-ordinator will guide on the advisability of placing the student with another who speaks the same language in form or class groups.
- Parental Links: Access to the full range of parental involvement will be supported by means of accessible communication strategies, such as translations, etc.
- Refugees: All staff are committed to providing a safe and secure environment and being sensitive to the previous experiences of refugees and their families.