

LANGUAGE POLICY

Philosophy

At SIS, we believe that language is fundamental to the academic and social success of our students in an increasingly global society. As an international school it is our duty to recognize the language backgrounds of our student body and to support first, second and additional language development. Languages are an expression of one's culture and identity and should be identified and celebrated throughout the school curriculum. To achieve this we believe that all members of the school community (students, staff, parents and concerned bodies) should be active participants in this process.

Therefore:

- All students at SIS have the opportunity to become proficient in English
- All students are provided with the opportunity to learn an additional language
- The teaching of language is the responsibility of all teachers
- The learner profile is integral to language teaching and learning practices at SIS
- International mindedness is embedded in teaching and learning practices at SIS

Language profile

All students learn through the medium of English and this is the predominant language of communication inside and outside the classroom. Other mother tongue languages are not currently supported in the curriculum but students are encouraged to develop these.

EAL support

As English is the predominant medium of learning in the curriculum at SIS, and because the majority of our students do not have English as their mother tongue, the EAL programme is a very important part of our school.

Throughout the school, students who need extra language support to access mainstream classes take EAL lessons, taught by a dedicated group of EAL teachers until they have reached a standard, whereby that support is withdrawn*.

In mainstream lessons it is recognized at SIS that all teachers teach language, therefore, all teachers from **Key** onward, complete the ESL in the mainstream course to support language learning throughout the curriculum.

- *Please see EAL policy documents for more detailed information on movement from EAL classes to mainstream.*

Additional Language development

At SIS we feel strongly that international minded students should have the opportunity to learn additional languages other than English. In this respect, SIS offers all students the chance to learn French and Mandarin. As the school develops it is hoped that the number of opportunities to learn other languages increases.

English as a Second Language

Language profile

The students at Straits come from a predominantly Malaysian background, although there are a number of other languages spoken. Except for specific language lessons (Mandarin, Bahasa and French) all students learn through the medium of English and this is the predominant language of communication inside and outside the classroom.

Everybody Teaches Language

At Straits, we recognise that every teacher in the school has an important part to play in helping students improve their English. With that in mind, subject teachers actively teach new vocabulary and make use of the student's vocabulary books as well as focusing on the quality, fluency and accuracy of student's written responses.

As part of this approach, teachers actively promote the use of formal and precise language in the classroom. The development of formal and more technical talk is essential to children's thinking and learning and raising standards in this area will benefit student development exponentially. Students need to be aware that they will be judged on how they speak English and their ability to master a formalised and technical register. Although students will have a different register for their social interactions, it is imperative that they are given the opportunity to develop their academic talk in classrooms, as modelled by the formal register adopted by the teacher. Ultimately, it is the duty of everyone to provide a classroom environment that allows students to practice and develop their academic talk. This will benefit their discussion skills, have a beneficial impact on their writing and provide them with the cultural capital to take full advantage of their future opportunities.

English at Straits (Admissions)

Students who are admitted to Straits will follow one of three English Language pathways:

1) First Language

2) Second Language

3) Second Language with EAL support

The decision as to which pathway they should enter is made initially by the Head of English using their entrance assessment and interview evidence. 'Second Language with EAL support' would be offered to those students who require extra tuition in order for them to improve their English. Depending on their nationality, students would be removed from either Bahasa, French or Mandarin to receive extra English Language tuition. This tuition would be in a small group setting so as to best maximise the potential for progress. It would be reviewed on a termly basis and would continue until it is deemed no longer necessary; at which point they would resume with a normal timetable.

Second Language Lessons

Description

As English is the predominant medium of learning in the curriculum at Straits, and because many of our students do not have English as their mother tongue, the Second Language programme is a very important part of our school. Students who require specific English language lessons will attend Second Language classes instead of the First Language class. Students will attend the Second Language class if their level of English precludes them from fully accessing and engaging with the curriculum in the First Language class. The final decision as to whether a student enter First or Second Language will be made by the Head of English based on the student's entrance examination They will take also take into account the age and best interests of the student in their decision.

Changing Streams

All students at Straits are working towards taking either IGCSE English Language or IGCSE English as a Second Language. Students are able to move from Second Language English classes to First Language if they are deemed able to successfully access the curriculum in the latter. Students who enter Second Language classes at an earlier stage in their academic career have a greater chance of changing streams as they will have more time to progress in their linguistic development. Again, the final decision as to whether a student changes streams will be made by the Head of English on advice from Second Language staff and they will take into account the age and best interests of the student in their decision. There may be some occasions where, through a lack of progress being made, the best interest of the student may be served by changing them from First to Second Language.

AIMS:

- To develop the ability to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication.
- To form a sound base of the skills, language and attitudes for further study and leisure.
- To develop English language skills to participate in the English-speaking classroom as quickly as possible.
- To support the development and progress of students to enable them to learn effectively in other curriculum areas.
- To develop an awareness of the nature of language and language-learning skills.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of other languages and their cultures.
- To provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation.

OBJECTIVES:

The programme concentrates on developing and extending the four main language skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing:

Speaking

Students should be able to:

- Communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately in a range of situations.
- Convey information and express opinions effectively.
- Employ and control a variety of grammatical structures.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary.
- Engage in and influence the direction of a conversation.

Listening

Students should be able to:

- Understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms.
- Recognise, understand and distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions.

Select and organise material relevant to different purposes.

Reading

Students should be able to:

- Understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms.
- Select and organise material relevant to different purposes.

Recognise, understand and distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions.

Writing

Students should be able to:

- Communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately.
- Convey information and express opinions effectively.
- Use and control a variety of grammatical structures.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of appropriate vocabulary.
- Observe conventions of paragraphing, punctuation and spelling.
- Employ appropriate register and style.

TEACHING APPROACH / METHODOLOGY

Vocabulary and grammar are taught through the four language skill areas and it is intended that this communicative multi-skills approach will help to develop the students' language abilities in an interesting and motivational way. Grammar and vocabulary are taught in context through modules of work which encompass a range of topics and themes designed to interest and promote discussion. Verb tenses, sentence structures and vocabulary are continually presented, reviewed and recycled, while the language features of text types are studied to enable students to write in a variety of genres. To this end, a wide range of text types is used to present authentic use of language, including magazine articles, interviews, narratives, songs and extracts from English literature. Emphasis is also put on correct pronunciation and intonation. Furthermore, the course gives insights into a number of cross-cultural and intercultural themes and students are actively involved in reflecting on the differences between other cultures and their own.

MARKING/ASSESSMENT

The assessment of students work will focus on the four skills areas (reading, writing, speaking and listening.) In line with the school wide assessment policy, student work will not be graded but will be given formative comments. For the purposes of school data collection and reporting to parents, students will be graded using the 'The Languages Ladder.' The Languages Ladder is a set of 'can do' statements for each skill at each grade. Although it may be used as an end-of-course assessment, it is designed to endorse the learner's achievement and to provide assessment when the learner is ready. The 'can do' statements can support formative assessment and Assessment for Learning. The statements can be used for self, peer and teacher assessment for progression in any language.

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade 10	I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage or conversation involving one or more speakers	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions	I can understand authentic written texts of moderate length and complexity. I can produce a summary covering the majority of points	I can structure my writing to produce a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for a specific purpose eg a letter to an employer or an account of a visit
Intermediate				
Grade 9	I can understand the gist of a range of authentic passages in familiar contexts	I can take part in a discussion, giving and justifying my opinions and ideas	I can understand a wide range of authentic texts in familiar contexts	I can communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics
Grade 8	I can understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions	I can narrate events, tell a story or relate the plot of a book or film and give my opinions about it	I can understand texts including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions	I can produce formal and informal texts in an appropriate style on familiar topics
Grade 7	I can understand longer passages and recognise people's points of view	I can answer unprepared questions in a conversation or following a presentation	I can understand longer texts and recognise people's points of view	I can write a text, eg a report, article or story, conveying opinions and points of view
Preliminary				
Grade 6	I can understand the difference between present and past and future events in a range of spoken material	I can give a short prepared talk, expressing opinions and answering simple questions about it, using a variety of structures	I can understand the difference between present, past and future events in a range of texts	I can write a text, giving and seeking information and opinions, using a variety of structures

Grade 5	I can understand the main points and opinions in spoken passages made up of familiar material from various contexts	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, including expressing my opinions	I can understand the main points and opinions in written texts from various contexts	I can write a short text on a range of familiar topics, using simple sentences
Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a spoken passage made up of familiar language in simple sentences	I can take part in a simple conversation and I can express my opinions	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from short written texts in familiar contexts	I can write a short text on a familiar topic, adapting language which I have already learnt
 Breakthrough				
Grade 3	I can understand the main points from a short spoken passage made up of familiar language	I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests	I can understand the main points from a short written text in clear printed script	I can write a few short sentences with support, using expressions which I have already learnt
Grade 2	I can understand a range of familiar spoken phrases	I can answer simple questions and give basic information	I can understand and read out familiar written phrases	I can write one or two short sentences to a model and fill in the words on a simple form
Grade 1	I can understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases	I can say and repeat single words and short simple phrases	I can recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases	I can write or copy simple words or symbols correctly
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing

The EAL department teaches English to those students who need extra support to access fully the mainstream curriculum. Students are taught in small classes with other students of similar language ability.

These classes provide students with a friendly, supportive and reassuring atmosphere which encourages communication. It is also hoped that this environment will develop the self-esteem and self-confidence of students, thus enabling them to cope better in mainstream classes. EAL students are also supported in selected lessons by the EAL teaching assistant.

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To this end, a wide range of text types is used to present authentic use of language, including magazine articles, interviews, narratives, songs and extracts from English literature. Emphasis is also put on correct pronunciation and intonation. Furthermore, the course gives insights into a number of cross-cultural and intercultural themes and students are actively involved in reflecting on the differences between other cultures and their own.

Marking/Assessment

Aims:

In line with the Purpose and the Principles of the SIS Secondary School Assessment and Reporting Policy, the aims of the EAL Department's Policy of Assessment are as follows:

- To evaluate the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding.
- To evaluate skills as they develop.
- To diagnose student needs.
- To monitor standards of teaching and learning.
- To measure teaching objectives against learning outcomes.
- To act as feedback for curriculum development.

Objectives:

- Students should be able to demonstrate the full extent of their capabilities and knowledge.
- Tasks should be appropriate to the skills and knowledge acquired by the student in their course of study.
- Students should have criteria that are known and understood by them in advance.
- Students should be encouraged to be responsible for their own learning.

Formal Assessment

Key Stage 3

At the end of each half term, students are given extended pieces of writing in various genres to complete in test conditions; these tasks generally require students to understand and respond to a written stimulus. These tasks are graded using a mark scheme which includes one mark for content and one for vocabulary and structure (see below). Out of a combined total of 20 marks, 17 + is awarded an A, 13 – 16 a B, 12 - 10 a C, 9-7 a D and below 7 an E grade. End of Module tests would also be set and marked according to an official mark scheme and graded as follows: A = 90%+, B = 80+, C = 70+.

In addition a formal speaking test would be conducted at the end of each term for all students; this would also be assessed according to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary and fluency out of a total of 30 marks.

Mark Band	CONTENT / MESSAGE	Mark Band	LANGUAGE: Vocabulary and grammar
9/10	ALL content parts have been covered appropriately. The message has clearly been communicated to the reader.	9/10	A wide range of structures and vocabulary within the task set. Errors will be minor and overall no effort will be required by the reader.
7/8	ALL content parts covered. Message communicated successfully on the whole.	8/7	A wide range of structures and vocabulary within the task set. Some errors may occur, but little effort will be required by the reader.
5/6	ALL content parts attempted satisfactorily, but message requires some effort by the reader. OR: One content part omitted, but others clearly communicated	5/6	A fairly wide range of structures and vocabulary. There will be mistakes and some effort will be required by the reader.
3/4	Message only <u>partly</u> communicated. Work may be short. OR: Two parts omitted.	3/4	Simple, limited use of grammar and structure with repetition. Mistakes will limit communication. A lot of effort will be needed by the reader.
1/2	Message needs a lot of effort by the reader. Little relevant content. The work may be short.	2/1	The response will be difficult to understand due to the high number of errors. Vocabulary very limited.
0	NO message communicated.	0	Impossible to understand due to mistakes.

Speaking Mark Scheme

	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency
9-10	Simple and complex sentences with confidence. Candidate in control.	Wide and varied – never has to search for the right word. Precise and varied with some sophistication.	Contributes at some length. Can respond to a change in direction of the conversation. Pronunciation and intonation are clear.
7-8	Structures generally accurate throughout. Some possible errors in more complex sentences.	Vocabulary sufficient to convey ideas and information with competence. Errors with more complex and precise vocabulary.	Contributes at length. Frequent prompting unnecessary. Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear.
5-6	Simple sentences correct, but errors with complex.	Simple ideas and information are clear, but vocabulary is not wide or varied. Hesitation, repetition and searching for words.	Possible one sentence at a time, but keeps the conversation going. Errors of pron. / inton. but communication is maintained.
3-4	Single words or very simple sentences with errors. Communication restricted.	Vocabulary inadequate even for simple ideas.	Brief responses with considerable pauses. Pron. and inton. cause communication difficulties.
1-2	Structured sentences will rarely achieve communication. Some attempt at a response.	Single words is the norm and there will be long gaps.	Brief responses with little communicated. Pron. and inton. cause difficulty for most sympathetic listener.
0	Very limited – no attempt at a response.	Very limited – no attempt at a response.	Very limited – no attempt at a response.

At the end of each half term, students are given extended pieces of writing in various genres and summaries to complete in test conditions; these tasks generally require students to understand and respond to a written stimulus. KS 4 /5 are assessed using IGCSE and IB external assessment criteria for all extended writing and summaries. Students also perform an oral task at the end of each term which is similarly assessed using the external criteria set out by the examination boards. KS 4 also sit a formal listening task.

Reports

The Attainment Grades recorded on students' written reports will be based upon a range of assessment tasks. The composition of the Attainment Grade is as follows: 50% would be based on the average grade of the extended pieces of writing completed in test conditions plus the 3 oral presentations. The remaining 50% will be based on tasks done in class and for homework.

Assessment Levels

Due to the inaccessibility of the English NC Levels to EAL students, the Council of Europe Framework (CEFR) of levels is used. The CEFR describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level. Students are assessed once per term according to the framework below:

Level and Description

A1

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

B1

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2

Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

C1

Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

C2

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Continuous Assessment:

An 'overall' informal and continuous assessment of the student's progress and effort is made through the end-of-unit tests, exercise book, standard of homework, and class participation.

Listening

Listening exercises based on CD-ROMS, and marked based on the ability of students to decode phonetics, listen for the main ideas and listen for detail.

Speaking

Presentation or similar project where the students are expected to speak on a subject area. Marks are awarded according to how successful the presentation is in terms of content and grammatical structure. Students are also assessed on how they perform in pairwork / small group activities

Reading

Preferably students should be assigned a reading before it is taught, and comprehension questions may be answered in complete sentences or in note form giving the relevant information. Marked according to how deeply the student understands the material.

Writing

Usually given as classwork, this can consist of 10 minutes of free writing or longer periods of practising with particular genres. Tasks are marked on content, text level features and grammar according to the EAL Department mark grid.

Self/Peer Assessment and Correction

As an integral part of the teaching and learning process, students are regularly asked to assess and correct their own work and that of their peers using the relevant criteria. This not only familiarises them with these criteria, but also encourages them to be more careful when planning their work in order to ensure that all the demands of the criteria are met.

Resources

Main Teaching Resources:

KS 3

English in Mind Book 2 (Year 7) – Puchta, Stranks and Lewis- Jones

English in Mind Workbook 2

English in Mind Book 3 (Year 8)

English in Mind Workbook 3

English in Mind Book 4 (Year 9)

English in Mind Workbook 4

Course book CD Roms
Test it, Fix it! (Grammar practice)
PET Preparation and Practice – Ann Ward
Reading Practice – Liz Driscoll

KS 4

Success International Students' Book – Marion Barry
Success International Workbook – Marian Barry
Practice Tests for IGCSE Listening and Speaking – Marian Barry
Practice Tests for IGCSE Reading and Writing – Marian Barry
Summary and Notetaking – Marian Barry
Course book CD Roms
Test it, Fix it! (Grammar practice)
English as a Second Language – Peter Lucantoni

KS 5

English B – Elfreda Hedger
A variety of literary texts / poetry.
Anglophone articles from newspapers and magazines.

Lesson Observations

The EAL Department feels that much may be gained from lesson observations in terms of staff development and the improvement of teaching and learning. To this end, and in line with the RISS Secondary School Lesson / Peer Observation Policy, lesson observations for all department members are carried out by the Head of Department at least once per year. Peer observations are also strongly endorsed and will be conducted as often as possible throughout the year; where appropriate, feedback from the latter will subsequently form part of departmental meetings as a way of sharing and cascading good practice.

Cross Curriculum Opportunity

The content and methodology of the EAL classroom reflect and relate as much as possible to the demands of mainstream subjects in terms of cross-curricular topics and vocabulary. Furthermore, students are taught study skills which they will find useful in all areas of the curriculum; these include listening and reading for gist and detail, note-taking and summarizing texts. They are also given opportunities to improve their oral skills by giving presentations on different topics. In addition, emphasis is placed not only on producing written responses to questions in a variety of genres, but also on analysing and correctly interpreting the types of question found in other subject areas.

Graduation from the EAL Programme

In line with the above 'Assessment Policy', students are assessed once per term and, based on their performance, they may 'graduate' from the EAL programme and move to mainstream English. In recognition of this achievement, a 'graduation' certificate is awarded and presented in a school assembly.

Future Developments

As a way of improving standards, the department has highlighted the need for more reading as a future focus, with a discrete reading period being a regular component of the course. To this end, more readers will need to be bought so as not to interfere with other existing subject areas. Ways to improve the use of grammar in essay writing to counter the practice of repeatedly making the same basic errors will also be considered. In addition, the department intends to work more closely with mainstream teachers to see how the teaching and learning experience of our students may be improved.