



3b -English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Aims

Port Regis welcomes EAL pupils and provides facilities to accommodate them whatever their level of English. Our aims in teaching English as an additional language are that these students will be able to achieve their academic potential through the medium of English, and to derive the fullest possible social benefit from their time at Port Regis.

Parents of EAL pupils send their children to Port Regis for individual reasons, but these fall into two broad categories:-

1. Children who intend to complete their education in independent schools in England, and who need to be prepared for mainstream Common Entrance or public schools' own entrance procedures. These children spend from one to four years at Port Regis.
2. Spanish children of A or B form age who spend one year in England to achieve Cambridge Preliminary Test or First Certificate standard in English.

Principles

EAL pupils are encouraged to become both fluent and accurate in English. This covers both social and academic language, and comprises the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each new pupil is assigned to a 'shadow', who helps him/her to settle into Port Regis life, and is his/her first friend. New EAL pupils are encouraged to mix with native English speakers, and existing pupils are encouraged to welcome those who are new. Whilst the stated aim of attending Port Regis is often to learn English, it should be recognised that EAL pupils will assimilate the Port Regis way of life as their benchmark for England and English people, so it is important that their experience be positive. English students will also learn about other cultures, to their mutual benefit. At all times, the cultures of the EAL pupils are respected and valued as part of the cosmopolitan ethos of Port Regis.

The majority of pupils whose first language is not English are familiar with the English alphabet and spelling, and have a degree of literacy in English. Staff at Port Regis are trained to adapt their induction and support of these pupils according to their experience of different education systems. This may mean, for example, providing additional opportunities to use lateral thinking, or to contribute verbally in class. At all times, the aim is to build on existing learning strengths and create an atmosphere in which individual progress can be made and a love of learning promoted.

Strategies

As the EAL pupils arrive at Port Regis throughout the academic year from several different countries, each student necessarily follows an individual programme. All new EAL pupils are assessed within their first week at Port Regis, and their EAL timetables decided in conjunction with their tutors. These timetables depend on the number of EAL lessons they need, and the best way to fit these in with the mainstream timetable. It is not possible to group them according to age or level of competence so each student may attend EAL lessons with different students of different ages and abilities at different times. Individual lessons are few. The mixture of students dictates a friendly, helpful, caring and mutually

interested environment within the classroom, itself an aid to learning. The atmosphere created is conducive to study, and non-threatening. Discussion among students is encouraged.

The number of EAL lessons a student needs depends on his/her individual requirements, dictated by his/her reason for coming to Port Regis. Children arriving in the Pre-Prep with little or no English are not taught EAL separately: they are supported where necessary by TAs and, if possible, Mrs Cardozo will take older children across to chat to them in their mother tongue and to help them generally. Our experience is that, in an environment of stimulating social and educational interaction, Pre-Prep children make rapid progress in English. While C, D and E form children with weak English benefit academically from as many EAL lessons as possible, their social development is also considered, and a balance agreed with tutors. The number of EAL lessons for older children depends on the mainstream subjects which they can access and in which they will be examined. Pupils are withdrawn from English or non-examinable subjects for their EAL lessons, depending upon their level. They are then often reintegrated when their English has improved, and this is always our ultimate aim.

At the beginning of each term all the new children are seen on the first school day. They have an induction session, in which they are given a tour of the school, as well as an explanation of the main areas of school life. On the first day their grammar, vocabulary and listening skills are tested using the Oxford Placement Test. These tests have been calibrated against the levels system provided by the CEF (Common European Framework of References for Languages). They reliably identify the learner's CEF level, which corresponds and is linked to the Cambridge EAL examinations which are taken by many of our pupils each year. A piece of written work, such as an account of a favourite hobby, is also set to gauge the level of their extended writing. To assess their spoken level, each pupil is interviewed.

Parental consent is then ascertained, and EAL lessons begin. An EAL Profile for each EAL pupil is then produced, which is available to teachers on 3Sys. It offers guidance on the extent of previous English language experience, the pupil's first language and their aims. The pupil's strengths and weaknesses in term of English are outlined, and useful strategies are suggested for overcoming their individual difficulties, and for differentiation.

At the end of each term, all EAL pupils take an internal EAL examination, as well as being tested at regular intervals throughout the year. Cambridge exams are taken in May.

Reporting to parents

This takes the form of:

1. Termly written reports, which focus on each child's facility in English, and highlight areas requiring special attention;
2. Effort Grades quarter-termly;
3. Formal parents' evenings;
4. Informal meetings with parents, guardians and agents whenever they are in England and able to visit the school;
5. Email contact, giving regular updates on a child's progress.

Methodology

1. Children who intend to enter senior schools in England include:

- a) Those who come to Port Regis in F or E forms usually know little or no English. They follow a lexically based syllabus to give them the tools to express themselves. If they can read the English alphabet, they use the Cambridge Starters/Movers/Flyers, or the Macmillan English series of workbooks as a basis for learning. These children integrate into mainstream classes as and when they can access the material, according to the subject.

- b) Those who come to Port Regis in D or C forms follow a grammar or a lexical-based syllabus according to their learning styles. These children also use the Cambridge Young Learners courses or 'Cambridge English for Schools'. They integrate into mainstream classes as and when they can access the material, according to the subject.
 - c) Those who come to Port Regis in B form arrive at the beginning of the two-year English Common Entrance programme. Students progress through the 'Junior English' as an introduction to native speaker English comprehension passages, and as a precursor to Common Entrance passages, or the 'Cambridge English for Schools' series. They are also helped to access the stories in books recommended for the literature section of 13+ English Common Entrance. Grammar and lexis are also reinforced as necessary. These children attend mainstream classes according to the subjects which they can access and in which they will be examined.
 - d) Children who start in A Form have only one year before CE. Their EAL programmes therefore depend entirely on their individual needs, but usually concentrate on the comprehension of short and extended text (including books recommended for the literature section of 13+ English Common Entrance), and on creative writing. Grammar and lexis are reinforced as necessary. These children attend mainstream classes according to the subjects in which they will be examined.
2. Spanish children of A or B Form age who spend one year in England to achieve Key English Test, Preliminary English Test or Cambridge First Certificate standard in English.

These students follow a syllabus based on 'Objective KET', 'Objective PET' or 'Focus on First Certificate' and on past examination papers. They attend mainstream lessons according to decisions reached after discussions with tutors, subject teachers and the teacher Head of EAL. Students are entered for these examinations on the recommendation of the Head of EAL, and/or the dictate of the agency through which they have been sent to Port Regis.

3. Children who spend from one term to one year at Port Regis to improve their English.

Younger children follow similar programmes to EAL pupils who intend to enter senior schools in England. Older children use 'Objective KET', 'Objective PET' or 'Focus on First Certificate' as a basis for study, and often undertake project work.

Liaison with Mainstream Classes

There is regular liaison with each child's tutor or form teacher and their English teacher, and on a needs basis with other subject staff. This is constantly maintained, both to help students before they attend mainstream lessons, and to monitor their progress once they have started attending these lessons. It is also valuable to ascertain if certain resources can be shared. Subject support is offered for all subjects, as well as comprehension work based on the topics covered in RS and History. Mathematical language is covered, as well as the vocabulary required for Science and Geography.

Resources

The textbook series 'Cambridge English for Schools' teaches grammar and vocabulary through interesting, cross curricular subject matter which means pupils are not only learning language, but also facts related to the world around them and their school subjects.

The websites Onestopenglish, Teachitworld and TES Resources are all sources of excellent support material.

Those taking Cambridge KET and PET Examinations use the 'Objective' series of course books, and the 'Testbuilder' series of practice papers.

A wide selection of the latest grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation materials are also used, as well as a wide collection of EAL readers, particularly Penguin Readers and Penguin Young Readers. The Library has a good selection of EAL reading books. Graded readers for EAL are also available to the children in the boarding houses.

Students are encouraged to have their own concise dictionaries/electronic dictionaries. There are also bi-lingual dictionaries available for use in the EAL classroom, as well as English dictionaries and thesauruses.

Senior schools

There is now no EAL CE English Entrance paper, so it is necessary for EAL pupils to take CE English wherever possible. Many pupils are pre-tested and occasionally negotiations are made with senior schools regarding concessions available for second language learners. Therefore it is necessary to advise and liaise with parents and schools either directly or via tutor or agent.

Staff

Julia Cardozo BA, MA (Oxon); TEFL, as the only member of staff in the department, is responsible for its running.

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