



Leigh Academy
Strood

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Language Policy

Academic year 2025/26

Date of issue	September 2025
Date to be revised	August 2026

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Intent

As an IB World school Leigh Academy Strood 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 academy’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 (85.6%) with a small population speaking a variety of other languages (including, but not limited to Yoruba, Polish, Lithuanian, and Turkish) 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 Strood we strive to implement the 4 tenets of The IB Language Tenets: the nature of language, The nature of communication, the language learner, learning language and communication. The 4 tenets are evident in both our IB MYP and IBCP delivery, providing opportunities for students to engage in language development and skills in both their mother tongue and multilingual studies.

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 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 from different global contexts in order to develop global-mindedness through a range of literary studies.

In Languages B (French & Spanish), students learn at least one language at Key Stage 3, in addition to their mother tongue. All students (with a few exceptions) will also continue to study a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4. The emphasis is on transactional and interactional 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 pupil and staff exchanges and written communication.

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 Key Stage 3 with a focus on phonics, vocabulary and grammar. Within the CP course all students participate fully in Language Development classes and are provided the opportunity to study a Language Acquisition subject. Language combinations are arranged according to modern foreign language studies at primary academy 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 as Language A (mother-tongue speakers and functional bilinguals). Students who, on entering the Academy, have limited competence in English are given additional initial language support interventions to enable them to learn effectively and confidently in their other subjects as soon as possible and therefore complete their studies in English as Language A. Staff are provided with opportunities to learn about language-learning and language-teaching as part of the academy's CPD; classroom teachers are, thus, aware of EAL 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's culture.

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.

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".

Parental Engagement

At Leigh Academy Strood we have taken steps to ensure that parents are involved in the strategies used to develop students language skills in the following ways:

- Providing parents and students with access to digital learning tools (chromebook and software such as Read&Write) to promote listening, reading and writing in the mother tongue and language of instruction
- Inviting parents to our Parents Voice Forums to provide feedback on our language policy and strategy
- Informing parents of the targeted intervention programme devised to support proficiency in the language of instruction
- Give parents the opportunity to feedback to the leadership team regarding support for language proficiency in our modular parent surveys
- Discussing opportunities for students to take formal examinations in their mother-tongue/other spoken languages and provided with support where possible.

We continue to communicate via regular phone calls, emails and letters to all parents to share our curriculum plans at the beginning of each module and direct parents to this on our website allowing them to collaborate in the development of language acquisition.

Our EAL lead hosts regular group meetings with parents and students to discuss the most effective strategies to promote language development in the language of instruction.