

# Language Acquisition Policy

**Reviewed: August 2024**

**Next Review Date: July 2025**

## 1. PHILOSOPHY

As a candidate for IB School, Leigh Academy Hugh Christie 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. At Key Stage Three, students follow the full curriculum offer which includes the study of German or Spanish (in addition to English as their main language) until the end of Year 9. Almost half of our students at Key Stage 4 continue to study an additional language and it is our intention to increase this further as we develop our MYP curriculum.

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). 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 (93.8%) 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, for example Polish.

At Leigh Academy Hugh Christie, 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.

## **2. 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 (German & Spanish)**, students learn at least one language at Key Stage 3, in addition to their mother tongue. A majority of students will also continue to study a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4 as part of the EBACC. 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, personalised 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 7-9 will complete a Service as Action project and Service learning project where communication with others will be vital.

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. 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.

## **3. 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 Leigh Academy Hugh Christie 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 fulfilment 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".

### **MYP Language and Literature**

Language A will be English and the second language will normally be German or Spanish. Students who are bilingual, or nearly so may opt for a second Language A (instead of a Language B). Students are encouraged to take formal examinations in their mother-tongue/other spoken languages and provided with support where possible. This may be delivered one-on-one or in small groups.

## **4. EAL Provision within the MYP**

Students entering Leigh Academy Hugh Christie 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 possibly 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/SEND Department monitor the progress of EAL/English B students 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.

## **5. LANGUAGE-TEACHING**

All languages (MYP Languages A and B) 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**

The taught language curriculum DoL for English; literacy coordinator, class teachers  
Placement in language classes DoL for MFL, for EAL support SEN Coordinator  
Profiling of new admissions SEND Coordinator  
Review of language policy Senior Leadership Team,

### **6. RESOURCES**

The teaching of languages is supported by a wide range of audio-visual resources and online resources via the google classroom. Instructional methods are enhanced by the deployment of appropriate and effective ICT resources. Student-led assemblies may be arranged to provide 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.