



Brentwood School Languages Policy

Document Owner:	Deputy Head Academic (Senior)		
Relevant to:	Whole School		
Regulatory Body:	International Baccalaureate Organization		
Relevant Legislation/Guidance:	<i>IB Programme Standards and Practices, 2020</i> <i>IB Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, 2008</i>		
Last reviewed by:	SLT 18th September 2025		
Last approved by and date:	SLT 18th September 2025 Pending Education Committee Ratification (November 2025)		
Next review due:	May 2027		
Last updated	September 2025		
Current version published:	22nd September 2025		
Circulation:	All Staff	Governors	Website
Related & supporting Policies:	Curriculum Policy	Admissions Policy	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
	Teaching and Learning Policy	Equal Opportunities Policy (Pupils)	Assessment Policy

LANGUAGES POLICY¹

Our language philosophy

Language and literacy are integral to exploring and sustaining personal development, cultural identity and intercultural understanding. English is the lingua franca at Brentwood School: it is both the language of instruction and it is the language of the host country in which the School is situated. We are committed to inclusion and therefore facilitating and enabling all students to develop English in order to fully access the curriculum. At the same time, we value and celebrate diversity in our School community and enable all students whose first language is not English to study their mother tongue, in the spirit of additive bilingualism and thereby affirming their identity. We are committed to the principles of international mindedness and open-mindedness and expect all our students to study at least one foreign language in addition to their mother tongue, at least up to GCSE level. And we have the capacity for students to study three modern foreign languages to GCSE level. Facility with languages, and understanding of language and linguistic register is empowering and is instrumental in our students becoming effective communicators and life-long learners. Language is central to all learning and all teachers regardless of their subject are aware of their responsibilities as teachers of language. In the Prep School, which follows the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), language learning fosters international mindedness and multilingualism; language is learned, taught and used across Units of Inquiry and daily classroom life. The school recognises multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning, and commits to enabling students to develop and use multiple languages across the community.

The School context and language profile of our student body

We are a School of around 1320 pupils situated in an ethnically diverse area in Essex. Our small boarding houses (around 70 pupils) also enable us to take pupils whose families reside all over the world. The language of instruction at the School is English, but around 5% of pupils have a mother tongue other than this or speak another language or languages with equal fluency alongside English at home. This 5% is made up of a very diverse number of languages indeed. We identify pupils whose mother tongue is not English and provide tailored additional support through our EAL (English as an Additional Language) Department.

Our usual English language requirement at admission is: A2 Level on the Common European Framework (CEFR) for entry to Year 7 or 8; B1 Level for entry to Year 9 or 10; B2 Level for entry to Year 11 or Sixth Form.

¹ The IBO requires that the Senior School has a Languages Policy as part of the Standards and Practices relating to Brentwood being an IB World School; the policy is not a regulatory requirement under the Independent School Standards Regulations.

At application and admission to the School, students and parents joining the School are asked what languages students speak at home, including community languages. This language profile is recorded in our Management Information System, iSAMs.

The Languages Curriculum

Our languages curriculum is personalised to the individual needs of our students, providing additional support for those who need it, while enabling students to study a wide range of languages.

At the Prep School

French (From Foundation – Year 2) taught programme

From Foundation to Year 2, French is integrated through daily routines (songs, stories, talk) to develop listening and speaking first, with emergent reading/writing supported as developmentally appropriate. Pupils are taught by language specialists as part of a weekly carousel.

Spanish (Years 3–6) – taught programme

In years 3–6, Spanish is taught as a continuous programme with links to Units of Inquiry and key concepts; learners regularly apply Spanish for real purposes (presentations, interviews, signage, reflection).

Enrichment: German (Year 4); French (Year 3); Chinese (Years 5–6); British Sign Language (Year 6)

Enrichment language/culture experiences (German year 4, French year 3, Chinese years 5–6) BSL (Year 6) broaden cultural perspectives, strengthen international mindedness and encourage multilingual curiosity; pupil experience feeds back into class inquiries.

In line with IB PYP expectations, all pupils learn a language in addition to the language of instruction from at least age 3; at Brentwood, this is met through Spanish from Year 3, with earlier exposure to French in EYFS to Year 2.

Language in the PYP (Prep School) – key commitments:

- Language across the curriculum: every teacher is a teacher of language; disciplinary and transdisciplinary language demands are planned for Units of Inquiry.
- Inquiry-led approaches: students build conceptual understanding of language through questioning, exploration and purposeful use in authentic contexts.

- International mindedness: home languages and cultures are recognised (class displays, library collections, family contributions), promoting bilingualism and identity.
- Progression and balance: planned development of listening, speaking, reading and writing with increasing accuracy, fluency and intercultural competence.
- Assessment for learning: ongoing formative assessment and feedback aligned with PYP expectations; success criteria make language learning visible within Units of Inquiry and specialist lessons.
- Teachers plan with consideration for each learner's language profile; pupils are supported and encouraged to make links between their home language(s) and the curriculum.
- Multimodal expression is encouraged (verbal, written, visual, digital) in multiple languages to make thinking and learning visible.

At the Senior School

Year 7 – All Year 7 pupils study three languages: one of French or Spanish; one of German or Chinese; and thirdly, Latin.

Year 8 – Pupils continue the language route chosen in Year 7.

Year 9 – Pupils choose options from French (continuation), German (continuation), Spanish (continuation), Chinese (continuation), Latin (continuation), Italian (beginners), Classical Greek (beginners), EAL.

Year 10 – Pupils choose GCSE options. The recommendation is that all students will continue with one modern foreign language, but can opt for up to four languages in the option blocks if they wish.

Year 11 – Pupils continue with their GCSE courses.

Lower Sixth – Pupils choose between A Levels, the BTEC Extended Diploma and the IB Diploma. French, Spanish, German, and Latin are available as both A Level and IB choices; Classical Greek is available in the A Level pathway; Chinese B, Italian B, Spanish ab initio and German ab initio courses are available in the IB Diploma route, as are English B and a number of Language A Literature courses for students who are bilingual or whose mother tongue is not English.

Upper Sixth – Pupils continue the courses begun in Lower Sixth.

We value all language-learning and aim to support the acquisition and development of any language including those which we do not teach ourselves. We will facilitate the accreditation of community languages and development of mother tongue by supporting pupils in sitting examinations through the School

wherever possible. Recent examples include GCSE Arabic, IGCSE Chinese as a First language, GCSE Polish, A Level Russian, A Level Chinese.

Languages within the IBDP

English A Literature and English A Language and Literature are delivered by the English Department, Latin is delivered by the Classics Department, English B is delivered by the EAL Department, and all other Language A subjects and Language B subjects fall under the remit of the Modern Languages Faculty and the Head of Modern Languages. All our languages teachers are graduates with teaching qualifications.



We are currently able to offer taught Language A Literature courses, both Higher and Standard Level, subject to there being sufficient numbers of students, in: English; German; Spanish; Italian; French; Chinese.

We also offer Self-taught School-supported Language A Literature courses for students whose mother tongue is not English, or in years when we do not have sufficient students for one of the above languages to justify running a full taught course. These students are supervised by a Language A Literature teacher at School who monitors their progress, teaches general literary analysis and ensures they meet the requirements of the course. We employ Language A Literature teachers from other IB World Schools as tutors to assess and offer feedback on key pieces of work over the two year course.

We are currently able to offer (though do not always have sufficient students to run) Language B courses, both Higher and Standard Level, in: German; French; Spanish; Italian; Chinese; English; Latin.

We are currently able to offer (though do not always have sufficient students to run) ab initio courses in: German; French; Spanish; Chinese; Italian.

Languages at ab initio level are only open to pupils with virtually no previous knowledge of the language, or who studied it at Key Stage 3 only. Ab initio language courses are not available for students who have studied the subject to GCSE level (or who have equivalent ability).

Language B courses are suitable for students with GCSE-level knowledge (or equivalent), or students who perhaps have a strong oral ability from home but no experience of the written language in an academic context. We normally expect students to have attained at least a grade 7 at GCSE to study a Language B course. Students with a grade 6 or lower at GCSE are usually advised to undertake study of a different language at ab initio level.

Language A Literature courses require strong ability and experience of using the language in an academic context, though students need not be “native speakers”. We are fully committed to the principles of additive bilingualism and encourage students to develop and extend mother tongue ability, thereby valuing and affirming their identity, while also integrating them fully into the Brentwood School community. We celebrate students who attain the IB Bilingual Diploma in our press releases about our IB Diploma results.

When students join the School, if there is any uncertainty as to which level language course would be appropriate, we assess these students formally.

English as an additional language

Students for whom English is not their first language participate fully in the School curriculum, alongside native English speakers. We are committed to inclusion and enabling all students to access the curriculum. We support our students for whom English is not their first language by offering additional EAL classes leading to an Cambridge English B2 certificate in Year 11, and the English B courses or Cambridge English C1 certificate in the Sixth Form. All subject teachers support the development of English by, for example, giving vocabulary lists of subject-specific terminology, and giving additional support where necessary. Advice, training, and support is coordinated by the Head of EAL.

Prep (PYP) provision: EAL support is delivered primarily through in-class scaffolding within Units of Inquiry and targeted small-group and one-to-one interventions as needed; home languages are valued as assets and used strategically to build English and conceptual understanding.