



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026

INTRODUCTION

Students are selected for The Royal Ballet School based on potential in Classical Ballet. Those who join the School from any (non-English speaking) country, therefore, have a considerable range of educational experiences; they may be literate in English, be literate only in their mother tongue or have partial experience in English through informal exposure in their home country. The Royal Ballet School looks on all newly arrived students as an asset to the School and values the contribution that they make, however, all new students for whom English is not their first language when offered a place, must work to develop their English language skills prior to joining the School.

From experience, students for whom English is not their first language make the most rapid progress in spoken English when they are integrated into normal academic and artistic classes. However, the School recognises that certain lessons may be inappropriate, and that additional specialist support may need to be provided. For example, lecture-based degree sessions and Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) studies can be difficult for some EAL students to access, therefore students do not undertake these until they have gained CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) Level B2 English or equivalent; (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>).

The School will encourage intensive peer support as part of the induction programme for EAL students, and they will be subject to close monitoring and support by House and EAL staff.

ASSESSMENT

Wherever possible, a member of the EAL department will interview students who may have a need for additional EAL support before they arrive. This will be done remotely using any available technology. An initial assessment of EAL needs will take place at this time. Recommendations for the study of EAL prior to arrival will be made, and students will be expected to undertake an appropriate EAL programme in their country of origin.

On arrival at school the English language ability of all new students is assessed by the EAL Department using an adaptive online assessment tool, the Cambridge English Placement Test, together with oral and written assessments. Assessment is done as quickly as possible so that a programme of study arranged can be put in place which best fits their needs and enables them to settle into the School and access as much of the artistic and academic programme as possible.

Where possible, a paper-based assessment may be undertaken at audition: this is solely for planning suitable support and does not in any way influence the selection process.

COURSES

Following assessment, a decision will be made on the level of integration into mainstream academic lessons based on a student's ability to cope with the academic and vocational subjects being taught. Individual plans and timetables will be devised for each student.

WHITE LODGE

All students will take Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 courses along with other English-speaking students. Some EAL students may take a reduced programme of study, and those in need of more language support will attend small-group or individual EAL lessons during academic time. Where possible, additional support may also be provided in mainstream academic classes.

At KS4, students with a sufficient level of English language proficiency will study mainstream GCSE English Language and Literature with their peers. Other EAL students will work towards an English Language qualification that best fits with their language level and the time frame available. This will be EITHER a Cambridge English language qualification (A2 Key for Schools, B1 Preliminary for Schools or B2 First for Schools) OR an iGCSE qualification (Cambridge iGCSE English as a Second Language or Cambridge iGCSE English as an Additional Language).

UPPER SCHOOL

All EAL students at Upper School will receive specialist EAL teaching. EAL students with Cambridge B2 or higher will complete the Degree with other students and will be offered supplementary work to aid with this from the EAL teacher. Students may, depending on academic development, study one year of the degree programme, gaining a Certificate in Higher Education (Cert H.E.) or be offered the opportunity to take an additional course on the Academic Enrichment Programme along with other English-speaking students.

EAL students with language level lower than B2 will take a single, one-hour lesson, in their year groups on Monday-Thursday mornings incl. In addition, they will be enrolled on the Trinity College Level 6 Diploma in Professional Dance, (see Curriculum Policy) and receive teaching on at least one morning each week depending on EAL needs.

DANCE

EAL students at both sites will attend all artistic lessons as timetabled at the start of the course. Artistic teachers are also encouraged to use visual methods when communicating corrections until an EAL student's language skills have developed.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (EHCP)

Any EAL student who has been placed on an EHC Plan will have specific support provided from the relevant academic, artistic and pastoral teams as needed to ensure that their needs are fully met. The needs of such students will be coordinated by the relevant Lead Teacher for EAL in consultation with the SENCO, Assistant Principal (Pastoral & Welfare) and other relevant staff.

COMMUNICATION

The Lead Teachers for EAL will disseminate an EAL register with assessment notes and other relevant information about EAL students to all artistic and academic teachers.

Written reports will be provided for parents throughout the academic year in line with the usual Reporting & Assessment Policy.

UPCOMING EVENTS

As part of our commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering an inclusive community, the Royal Ballet School will host its first International Day in the Summer Term 2027, alongside the Art Showcase event, bringing together EAL students from both White Lodge and Upper School. This unique event provides a platform for students to share their cultural heritage through food, traditional dress, music, poetry, and dance. With opportunities for students to present their favourite national dishes and to perform or display cultural traditions, International Day reflects the School's recognition of the richness that multilingualism and multiculturalism bring to our community.