

Leigh Academy Blackheath



Language policy

Approved by: Governing Board

Date: March 2025

Last reviewed on: February 2025

Next review due by: August 2026

Introduction:

At Leigh Academy Blackheath, we seek to ensure that the study of languages (English, Spanish, and French, as well as any future languages we may teach as the academy grows) and Mother tongues develops effective communication, assists personal growth, strengthens each student's awareness of his or her cultural identity, and promotes international understanding.

We recognise multilingualism as both a source of celebration and a resource for learning; and we seek to champion diversity in all its forms through the taught curriculum, our extra-curricular provision, and well as our PD programme.

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 opportunities to engage directly with other countries: through trips, exchanges and written communication.

Selection of Languages:

Students learn at least one language at key stage 3, in addition to English. Students can opt to study a maximum of two languages at key stage 4. In key stage 5, all students will engage in the development of at least one language as part of their IB programme. Currently in key stage 5 we offer Spanish at ab initio, SL and HL as well as French and German ab initio. We will constantly review this and look to offer additional Language Acquisition courses in the future. In addition, students are encouraged to obtain formal qualifications in their mother-tongue, where appropriate. Where this includes a language not offered by the academy's taught curriculum, one-to-one or small group study support is provided wherever possible.

Mother Tongue Support (English as an additional language):

Additional support is provided for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction (appendix 1 gives a breakdown of current mother tongue languages at LAB).

All teachers at LAB prioritise the development and maintenance of students' mother tongue, wherever possible. We support the development of mother tongue languages, as we believe that competence in one's own language provides a platform upon which further learning can be constructed. All members of our school community are responsible for supporting such development, and we remain passionate about sharing and celebrating best practice in this regard.

By encouraging the active use of mother tongues at home, at school and in the community, students and their peers are better able to appreciate diverse cultural origins and take action as internationally minded, global citizens.

We provide opportunities to highlight and support mother tongue languages through displays, assemblies, visitors from the community and celebrating the diversity of students and staff, both in the

classroom and around the school. We also aim to build our library resources to celebrate the multiplicity of languages, literature and cultures represented within the school, and routinely ask staff, students, parents and carers to recommend books in a range of mother tongues. We also utilise a range of virtual resources to help develop both students' mother tongue and other language-learning.

When LAB receives a request for a mother tongue course which is not currently offered onsite, the programme Coordinator will seek to source a Language Acquisition teacher from across Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) who may be able to support. Failing this, the programme Coordinator will seek to source a tutor (either locally or virtually) with appropriate teaching credentials and professional references, and offer parents and carers the opportunity to pay for their services. Where appropriate, said Coordinator will place families with common language goals in contact with each other, so that costs can be shared (please note: this would constitute a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which LAB bears no responsibility).

Language Teaching:

We recognise all staff as teachers of language and support all teachers in their contribution to the language development of students.

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;
- Offer opportunities for independent guided research and learning;
- Provide stimulating opportunities for language learning;
- Ensure that well-resourced teaching and learning is used to support mother tongue development.

Appendix 1: Mother tongue at Leigh Academy Blackheath

Understanding our students' first language is very important to us, as it encompasses our students' personal, social and cultural identity. In our journey to promoting native languages at LAB, our students will be given the opportunity to interact with other students who speak their same language and will be encouraged to practice this. In addition, whenever possible, teachers will offer students resources in their mother tongue. We have a very rich language diversity at Leigh Academy Blackheath, as per the diagram below:

