



## **“St. Peter’s English Language Support scheme for newly admitted primary students whose first language is not English”**

### **Mission Statement**

*English Language Support in primary education strives to empower pupils from many different communities to access the same educational opportunities as their peers and to become fully-integrated members of the community of the school, while respecting and valuing the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity.*



## **Introduction**

Students at St. Peter's School are "learning through English" in addition to "learning English".

English is both a target and medium of education: they are not only learning the dominant language but they are learning in it and through it as well.

Students are admitted in the school from the age of 18 months and total language immersion is provided. Teachers are native speakers and almost 100% of class time is spent in English. As a result, with so many hours exposure, their English language is good enough at the time they are required to learn the core subjects through English.

But this school also admits students at different stages of the education process, with or without being functionally proficient in English. Therefore, additional language support is provided to give equal opportunities to all students.

This document is intended to facilitate the design and delivery of English language support for non-English-speaking students in St. Peter's School.

## **Aims**

### *Equality*

To be proactive in removing barriers that stand in the way of our students' learning and success.

### *Diversity*

To meet our responsibilities to St. Peter's students by ensuring their equal access to the curriculum and the achievement of their educational potential.

### *Belonging and Cohesion*

To provide our students with a safe, welcoming, nurturing environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate.

## **Objectives**

To assist our students to become fluent English speakers as quickly as possible.

To accomplish full participation of the newcomers in mainstream schooling.



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

St. Peter's School has a full time language support teacher who will work alongside the class teachers and the English coordinator to deliver an appropriate language programme.

The **primary responsibility** of the language support teacher is to support the students' development of **English language proficiency** so that he or she can gradually **gain access to the curriculum**, ultimately achieving the same educational opportunities as their peers by:

- ✚ Working in collaboration with the class teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each student
- ✚ Preparing the student, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later more fully
- ✚ Helping the student to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general.

The responsibility of the language support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is **based on the primary curriculum** and which prepares and supports the child in:

1. Accessing classroom learning
2. Socializing with peers.

The development of the language essential for school learning and socialization provides a sound basis for the child's **ongoing acquisition** of language outside the classroom. It is essential, therefore, that language support in the school is firmly focused on the linguistic demands of life in the school and curriculum learning.

The language support teacher, however, **cannot 'teach the curriculum'** and this remains the role and responsibility of the class teacher. Students spend the greater part of their week in the mainstream classroom and attend language support for a small proportion of specialized class time. The benefit of this time, which is focused on



English language learning, can be maximized through **liaison and a flow of information** between the class teacher and the language support teacher.

### **Organization and facilities**

The starting point for language support can vary greatly from one learner to another. As a consequence, the language support lessons will be applied to individual students rather than groups.

English language support is provided on a withdrawal basis, during the school day, at least 3 hours a week. The time of support allocated to each student will vary according to the individual needs of the student and the number of enrolled students for whom English is a new language, allowing flexibility in the deployment of support.

The support lessons are formulated so as to emphasize the importance of providing pupils with the means of continuing to learn English during the many hours that they spend in the mainstream class.

Because effective language learning requires constant reinforcement and the revisiting of previously learnt information, it is important that **a room is dedicated** to language support. This allows for posters to be kept on the walls to support on-going learning and for the collection of a wide range of suitable resources such as books, posters, pupils' work, real-life objects, tape recorder, computer, etc.



## **Syllabus for non-English speaking students newly admitted to St. Peter's**

### **School**

**The sole purpose of language support is to allow the child to gain access to mainstream learning and to socialize within the community of the school.** Language proficiency in other areas will develop naturally as the child interacts with peers.

The structure of the syllabus consists of two main parts. Part I is organized in 10 Units of work:

1. Myself, my family and my friends.
2. Our school and my classroom.
3. Food: Lunch and snacks at school.
4. Clothes: My school uniform.
5. People in the school: different jobs and roles.
6. Transport: how do I get to school?
7. School holidays: seasons and weather.
8. Time. The school timetable.
9. Outside the school: The local and wider community.
10. Useful things to know: animals, plants and the environment.

The order in which the units of work are presented is dictated by the need to draw students as quickly as possible into full participation in the life of the school.

Students' confidence will grow as they develop the ability to communicate about themselves at a basic level and as they begin to understand the routine cycle of school activities.

While Part I is concerned with language learning for general communicative purposes in the school and in the classroom, Part II is concerned with language learning through and in conjunction with subject matter.

Part II is focused on the communicative needs imposed by the primary curriculum in the school. During this part, the language support teacher, in collaboration with the class teacher and the learner, will identify what subject or topics will occupy the class during the coming period. Therefore, language support can be focused on the relevant



topic area, which ensures that the students have every opportunity to begin to identify and engage with what is taking place in the mainstream classroom.

When a pupil's level of proficiency in English is extremely low, for example in the early weeks after arrival, access to mainstream class learning may be virtually impossible. During this time it makes sense for the pupil to continue, in the mainstream classroom, **work that has been started in language support sessions**. This makes valuable use of class time, keeps the pupil focused, and supports English language development.

This is particularly important for older pupils who, if not able to engage with the mainstream class, may become disruptive and generally de-motivated. **Liaison with the language support teacher** allows for language learning activities to be provided for use in the mainstream classroom. This provides relevant work for the pupil, allows him or her to have a sense of purpose while in class, and supports progress in language learning.

## **Evaluation**

It is vitally important that a record is kept of the pupil's linguistic development. This development is the key to all future educational achievement. Language support teachers record achievement on a **Pupil profile** which provides an instant overview of what the pupil 'can do'. Additional information from **observations by the mainstream class teacher** is important to the development of this profile.

At the end of each term, an English test is administered by the class teacher to evaluate the content of the programmes implemented so far. Therefore, in line with school policy, different tests which respond to individual progress made by the newcomers, will be administered. These tests will be designed by the support teacher for each individual student and they will be approved by the English Coordinator.

The stage of linguistic development reached by the pupil will determine the amount of language support that will be necessary. This will allow the decision to be made to



**reduce or terminate language support.** It is important that the pupil engages fully with mainstream learning as soon as possible.

Even after language support has ended, there are occasions when the non-English speaking pupil may need reassurance or some particular support. **An 'open' period** can be introduced each week when pupils can come to discuss a particular language difficulty or can be referred by the class teacher for some extra support.

