



Mayfield

# INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH







*"Friendly members of staff  
and students immediately  
made me feel welcome  
and created a second  
home for me."*

Paloma from Spain



# Welcome

International English is for overseas girls for whom English is not their native language. Studying International English fosters an improvement in English in all four skills areas – reading, writing, listening and speaking. It also nurtures an interest in Literature and British culture across all levels and year groups.

At Mayfield, we ensure that the girls who do not speak English as their first language are able to access the curriculum, and secure the necessary English-language qualifications and skills needed to study effectively at a British or American university and achieve their full potential.

All teaching is delivered in English, using a communicative method underpinned by the teaching of formal grammar. There is an emphasis on reading and writing to support academic skills in other subjects and every class is customised to the needs and interests of the particular girls.

The average score achieved by Mayfield girls taking the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – designed to assess the ability to listen, read, write and speak in English – is 7.5. This rates our girls' ability on average as between 'good' and 'very good' and has enabled them to attend some of the best universities in the country, including Oxford and Cambridge. International English teaching also supports the girls who need an English language qualification that is recognised in their own country.

Outside of the curriculum, all the girls are encouraged to join in school inter-house competitions, dance shows, sports teams, debating societies and general knowledge quizzes, to make the most of their time at Mayfield. Lots of cultural activities are organised by the boarding houses during the course of the year, including theatre trips and visits to museums. We also celebrate the girls' cultures through events like the International Fair, the Year 12 International Lunch and the Chinese New Year Dinner.

We look forward to welcoming you to Mayfield.

**Mrs Kasia Kilvington**

Head of International English



# International English at Mayfield

The International English department aims to help you improve all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and to nurture an interest in language and an appreciation of its importance.

## READING

We want you to be able to understand and respond with interest to an increasing variety and range of reading materials while developing specific reading techniques including skimming, scanning, reading for detail and inference. We also want you to have an appreciation of a wide range of literature including British, World and native literature and to read extensively yourself.

## WRITING

We want to help you develop an accurate, fluent style of writing, so that you can communicate information and ideas at the level required in your other subjects and in the wider world. This may range from simple factual writing to deliberate manipulation of style to suit a writer's aim.

## LISTENING

We will expose you to a variety of voices, accents, and dialects of people talking on subjects ranging from the day to day to advanced lectures.

## SPEAKING

We will enable you to communicate effectively and appropriately in spoken English, and to feel confident in doing so. This ranges from everyday communication to an ability to discuss global issues. You are required to speak English at all times during the school day, including with other speakers of your first language.

The following table outlines the curriculum girls taking International English at Mayfield will follow:

YEAR	AVERAGE GROUPS	STRONGER GROUPS
7	Pre-Preliminary for Schools/General English	B1 Preliminary for Schools
8	B1 Preliminary for Schools	Pre-First B2
9	Pre-First B2	First B2
10	First B2	IGCSE Literature & Language
11	IGCSE ESL	IGCSE Literature & Language
12	C1 Advanced or IELTS	C1 Advanced
13	IELTS (Target 7.5)	IELTS if a B grade at CAE not achieved in Year 12

Different universities set different English entry requirements and it is up to individuals to ascertain what they need to achieve. We work towards girls attaining IELTS 7.5 overall with a minimum of 6.5 in each component, which ensures access to most universities. The majority of universities also accept

C1 Advanced with a minimum score of around 186 on each component. However, this varies widely so it is important for applicants to ensure that they have the requisite score for each part of the examination – Reading, Listening, Writing, Use of English and Speaking.











# Why do International English?

The International English Department at Mayfield offers International English lessons as part of the curriculum for girls who do not speak English as a first language, to enable them to fully integrate academically and socially in the UK. It is well understood that literacy in the language in which education is delivered is essential to achievement across the curriculum for all pupils, but of particular concern for International English pupils. Skills such as reading comprehension, which impact on the acquisition of vocabulary, are especially important along with the development of writing skills essential for examination success.

## THE EVIDENCE BASE

Evidence suggests that mainstream subject content alone, no matter how accessible it is, is inadequate for second language learners and the extent to which language skills develop without language-conscious teaching is questionable. Mohan, Leung and Davison (2001: 65) go so far as to suggest that, 'a curriculum based on mainstream content can fail to develop fully the linguistic skills of the students for whom it was intended.'

In a study of academic writing produced by 177 students aged 16 (or over) at school and further education college, including 130 focal EAL students, a majority of whom had been in the English school system since primary school without targeted language teaching, Cameron (2003) found noticeable differences in proficiency. International English provision can focus on language difficulties but also through small classes and specialist teaching, offer different teaching approaches to deal with diverse linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds, and help to develop a variety of competencies, including how to negotiate the mainstream classroom.

## THE NEED FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORT THROUGHOUT LIFE AT SCHOOL

As it can take up to eight years for second language learners to achieve parity in all subject areas of language and academic achievement with native speakers (Collier, 1987), we integrate International English as a long-term curriculum commitment rather than short term language support, from Year 7 all the way to Year 13. The need for International English support can be masked by strong speaking skills. A team of academics at Cambridge University found that children who speak English as a second language can seem to be socially integrated at school but their written work can often fall behind. Dr Karen Forbes suggests that foreign students may develop oral fluency in a few months, but that it could take up to seven years to gain academic English proficiency (University of Cambridge, 2020). In our experience at Mayfield, girls can achieve high grades in Cambridge English Examinations on the strength of their performance in the speaking, listening and discrete grammar papers, despite a relatively poor performance on reading and writing, which is why language tests are not necessarily indicative of the level of a student's academic study skills and should not signal the end of the English learning journey. Our focus is on helping students to improve across all the skills to the best of their individual ability, so that they leave Mayfield as skilled as they can be, not just equipped with the minimum qualifications they need for university entry. This is why we encourage them to look beyond examination grades and to fully take advantage of the International English facilities that they have at School.

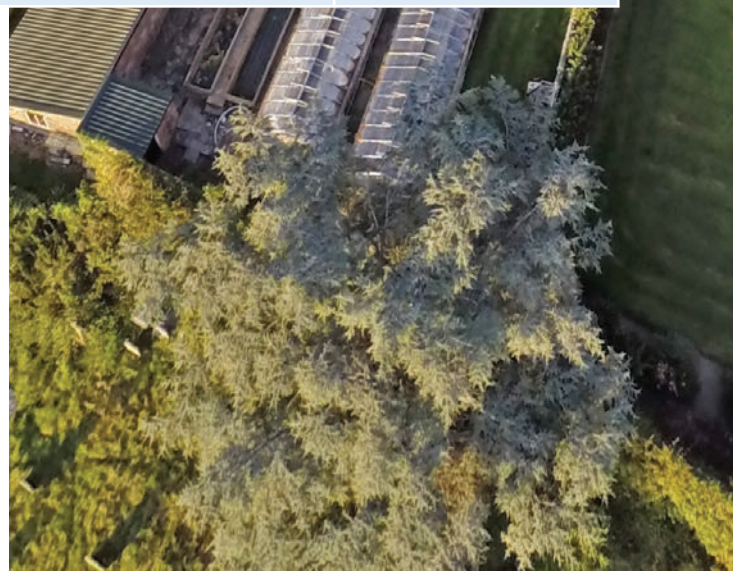
## THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS ON ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Research conducted by both the University of Cambridge and the University of York is starting to show why this is so important. Although the number of international students at UK universities is increasing, there is concern that in general they do not perform as well as home students (Morrison et al, 2005, cited in Trenkic & Warmington, 2019) and that their performance is in fact worsening. While nearly 68% of all students graduated with a first or 2.1 in 2013, this was true of only 52% of overseas students from outside the European Union and just 42% of students from China, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2016, cited in Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). In their 2015 study, Crawford and Wang (2015) found that whereas 80% of British students obtained a first or an upper-second class degree only 43% of Chinese students did.

While differences in outcomes have been considered in relation to a wide range of different factors including gender, motivation and learning styles (Swain, 2014), more recently, researchers at the University of York have identified differences specifically in relation to language and literacy skills (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). Based on an assessment of 63 Chinese and 64 British students at a UK university, they found large and significant group differences based on a number of indicators, a sample of which, are shown in the following table:

INDICATORS	CHINESE STUDENTS (AVERAGE IELTS BAND 6.92)	BRITISH STUDENTS
Vocabulary size (number of word families)	Average 8,000	Average 15,000
Comprehension questions answered correctly	42% upon entry	62% upon entry
Speed of processing (reading a question and selecting an answer)	9 seconds	5 seconds
Reading aloud rates	99 words per minute upon entry	166 words per minutes upon entry
Accuracy in reading comprehension task	Average 86%	Average 99%
Contribution of language skills to variance in academic performance	51.10%	10.70%

The results of the study suggest a significant association between language and literacy skills, and academic outcomes, but only up to a certain threshold in language proficiency. Outcomes for British students are not significantly impacted. Although it is difficult to establish exactly what that threshold is, what is apparent is that it does not correspond to the average language requirements which UK institutions set for incoming







international students, whose performance, furthermore, is largely predetermined by their language skills on arrival. All the Chinese participants in the study effectively had IELTS band 7, which is higher than the 6.0 required by many institutions, but still arguably not high enough for those wishing to achieve top degrees (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). In other words, while achieving a certain band at IELTS might get a student into university, it is not necessarily indicative of them attaining the optimum literacy and language skills required to thrive academically post-school and achieve the class of degree she is capable of.

‘Language proficiency at entry to university seems crucially important for international students’ academic success.’  
(Trenkic & Warmington, 2019)

#### **EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH THE SKILLS TO FLOURISH**

Although the study used a control group of Chinese students, the issues regarding language and literacy skills are highly likely to affect any overseas students with a comparable threshold of language proficiency (IELTS 6.92). Clearly many international students do extremely well in tertiary education but the study suggests that they are often capable of doing much better than their language abilities allow them to. Our key aim within the International English Department at Mayfield is to equip students with the skills to flourish both within and beyond school, ensuring that their language skills are as developed as they can be at entry to university, and that they are empowered to fulfil their academic potential and to thrive in every aspect of life post-school.

*“As I was a keen reader in my own language, I decided to read in English, and I loved it. Because of reading, my English level improved significantly, which made me more self-confident in my studies.”*

Sabina from Russia



# Meet the Teachers

## **MRS KASIA KILVINGTON**

Mrs Kilvington qualified as a teacher in 1994 and joined Mayfield in 2012. She studied History at Oxford University and later completed a Diploma in Teaching English to Adults, followed by a Master's degree in Global Development Management. She has taught in Poland, Colombia and the UK, and also been a Senior Editor at Oxford University Press, publishing English Language Teaching materials for Secondary schools in Latin America and North Africa, and setting up a new division for the Middle East. She has also worked as the International Training Manager for the RSPCA, managing projects related to animal welfare around the world, particularly in Asia. She has volunteered on human development and animal welfare projects in India, Zambia, Borneo and Greece. At Mayfield she is also the Scholarships and Gifted and Talented Coordinator and the Model United Nations Advisor. She loves spending time with her pets, reading, walking, going to the cinema and above all travelling.

## **MRS CAROLINE GIBSON**

Mrs Gibson joined Mayfield in 2018. She holds a degree in European Studies from Hull University and a Certificate in Teaching English to Adults. She has had a varied career in Media and the wine industry. In addition to being a full time International English teacher, she is also the Modern Foreign Languages Coordinator at Mayfield and a Middle School Head of Year. She loves all sports, in particular tennis, and in July she can be found on the grass tennis courts at Wimbledon umpiring. She also enjoys spending time at home with her two cats, gardening and walking, and has recently started to learn how to play Bridge.

## **MRS ANNA MAIMI**

Mrs Maimi joined Mayfield in 2012 and teaches Spanish as well as International English. She studied English Literature, Spanish and Philosophy at Durham University. In addition to her teaching responsibilities she is also a Middle School Head of Year and has experience of working in the boarding houses. She has taught at other schools in the UK and also overseas in Italy, Costa Rica and Guatemala. She has experience of teaching French at Key Stage 3 level and has also been an examiner for Spanish GCSE. She has worked as a Translations Project Manager and coordinated large translations projects. Mrs Maimi is a trustee of a charity in Ghana and has led a 3-week volunteering trip there and organised fundraising. She is still passionately involved in working with the Charity. She loves spending time with her young son Isaac and other family, as well as cooking, entertaining, music, yoga and meditation.

## **MISS MELANIE WHITTLE**

Miss Whittle joined Mayfield in September 2019. She studied English and German at Oxford Brookes University before completing a Master's degree in European Studies at the University of Exeter and a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education at the University of Bath. She also has a Diploma in Teaching English to Adults. She has taught in the UK and in Austria. Miss Whittle has also volunteered with Mercy in Action in the Philippines, helping street children, and Youth with A Mission in Costa Rica, as well as helping the elderly in her local area in the UK. She has a wide variety of interests including hiking, history and culture, and travelling. She loves learning languages and is currently learning Spanish. Miss Whittle also works in the Learning Support Department and is currently involved in co-ordinating a mentoring scheme which is designed to help girls reach their potential through peer support and guidance.







# Frequently asked questions

## Who is International English for?

International English is for girls for whom English is not their native language. We teach it for academic purposes, offering it as a Modern Foreign Language option, like French or Spanish, and also as a first language IGCSE option for girls in Year 10 who have already achieved a B2 language level. At Mayfield we place a strong emphasis on developing reading and writing skills in the classroom as listening and speaking skills tend to improve more rapidly due to your being totally immersed in an English speaking environment.

## Can I choose whether to do International English or English?

Your level of English will be assessed when you apply to the school and again upon arrival. Unless you have a near native speaker level of English in all the skills and have been studying in a UK or international school through the medium of English following a British curriculum, you are likely to be in International English rather than English. For girls in Year 10 who have the requisite language skills (Level B2) and level of interest in reading and literature, we offer the option of doing IGCSE first language English Literature and English Language within the International English department, with the added benefit of specialist language and skills support. The IGCSE mirrors the GCSE curriculum and provides the same level of challenge while offering the following benefits:

- Specifically designed for international students studying in international schools and UK independent schools.
- Literature choices are more international and some of the more challenging texts, such as Shakespeare, are optional rather than compulsory.
- Questions are more open-ended and therefore more accessible to international learners.
- More specialist language help is offered in International English and can focus on specific collective and persistent language problems.
- International English classes are much smaller (fewer than 10 pupils) so can offer more support and guidance, especially for those pupils with minimal previous experience of formal Literature study either in English or their first language.

For girls that start in Year 7, there is occasionally the possibility of moving to English in Year 8 or Year 9, either for a short-term period or long-term, depending upon their progress. This would normally mean achieving an A grade in B2 First and satisfactorily passing the English Entrance Examination. Any decision to move to English from International English or vice versa is made in collaboration between the International English and English Departments, and the Director of Studies, not by pupils or parents.

## What happens when I arrive?

Mrs Kilvington, the Head of International English, will be at school on your day of arrival to welcome you and answer any questions that you have about learning English. During your first week you will take an assessment and be allocated a class according to your ability with other girls from your year group. Within the first two weeks of term, we have a dinner for all the International English students to welcome new starters.

## How many lessons will I have?

International English pupils in Years 7 to 11 receive four to five hours of tuition a week in small ability groups of generally no more than eight pupils. Year 12 and Year 13 receive three hours a week. All the lessons take place during the school day in normal curriculum time.

## What happens in Sixth Form?

In the Sixth Form girls will study International English alongside their three or four other A levels. Sixth Form students who have obtained a Grade 6 (or higher) in GCSE or IGCSE English as a First Language or an IELTS level 7.0 overall (minimum of 6.5 in each paper) do not have to. However, the IELTS examination is only valid for two years, so if it has been taken before coming into Year 12 it must be retaken. Generally, students in the Sixth Form will study for the Cambridge C1 Advanced in Year 12 and then for the IELTS examination in February / March of Year 13. The Year 12 curriculum allows for extensive coverage of grammar structures alongside advanced reading skills and writing styles, while the intensive IELTS course in Year 13 is a fast paced examination preparation and practice course. However, for some students entering the Sixth Form with a lower level of language than anticipated, a two year IELTS examination programme would be put in place instead.



### **What are the aims of the Department?**

The International English department recognises and works to meet the English language needs of the current age. We want pupils to become strong independent language learners and for each individual learner to achieve the best language she is capable of in order to meet these and to study effectively in an English environment.

### **How are International English students assessed?**

We use a mixture of grade-based marking and comment-based marking but you will have at least one graded assessment each half term. We use the criteria used by Cambridge and IELTS to assess work. Feedback is also related to individual pupil ability, so if we feel you could be challenging yourself more, despite achieving highly, we will tell you! Equally, effort is rewarded even if you may be struggling. Language learning is a process and our feedback incorporates comment on progress over time. You are expected to correct your work yourself and we also encourage you to correct each other's work. Correction includes trying to make work better, not just correcting mistakes, for example, by finding a better word, rephrasing a sentence or finding somewhere you could use a particular structure. Range is as important as accuracy. Feedback is provided orally as well as in written form and we have regular individual tutorials with you to discuss your progress.

### **Where do we do examinations?**

Mayfield School has been accepted by The British Council as an official Internal Cambridge Examination Centre. This means that we are able to offer the following Cambridge examinations: B1 Preliminary for Schools, B2 First for Schools, C1 Advanced and C2 Proficiency on site. The Speaking examination element is also held on site with official Cambridge examiners coming to the school to hold the interviews. This makes the exams extremely convenient and reduces stress and anxiety. The only examination which girls must take out of school is the IELTS in Year 13, but this is organised by the school so that all the girls go together on the same day.

### **Do International English students get extra time in examinations?**

All non-native speakers of English are allowed a bilingual dictionary in all examinations except those which include marks for Spelling and Grammar: Religious Studies, Geography and History. A set of appropriate dictionaries is held on site at Mayfield with the Examinations Officer for specific use in external and school examinations but you must also have your own dictionary for everyday use. You can only qualify for extra time if you have a specific need that has been identified by the Learning Support Department following a formal assessment.

### **How does the International English Department help students to settle in?**

Moving country and studying in the UK can present challenges for overseas pupils. As a Department we try and facilitate integration by encouraging it as a two way process throughout the school. We support International English students in the communication of their personal cultural needs to the rest of the school, as well as helping them to assimilate into the community through a better understanding of British culture and traditions. Outside of the academic curriculum, there are a huge variety of activities on offer that the girls can enjoy, including inter-house competitions, social events, boarding trips and extra-curricular clubs.


*"I felt deeply supported by the International English staff and my classmates. This made me feel understood and made coping with being so far away from home much easier."*

Sofia from Mexico









*"I have been studying in the International English department since Year 10. I really enjoy lessons and my English has improved so much. I noticed a big improvement in my vocabulary and grammar. Meanwhile, the reading and writing training supports my academic learning in essay-based subjects. As we always have speaking practice in the form of group discussion, I am more willing to contribute in my other lessons. I am also able to express my opinion clearly which is a huge encouragement for a non-native speaker."*

Georgiana from China





Mayfield

Mayfield School, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex, TN20 6PH  
[mayfieldgirls.org](http://mayfieldgirls.org)