Statement of Intent

We value languages as an expression of cultures and foster linguistic diversity to help our students achieve the ideals of intercultural understanding and international mindedness. Communication, self-expression, curiosity to inquire and explore are central elements in our curriculum. At the same time, we believe that mother tongue should be maintained in order to facilitate cognitive development and cultural identity. In view of this, we take language development as a shared responsibility of all members of our school.

1. Language Philosophy

1. At Wotton House International School (WHIS), the foundation of all learning is through language. We aim to create inspiring learning conditions in which English, as the language of instruction, in conjunction with multilingualism, allows students to draw benefits from the daily community life in the school and from the learning process of each individual. At WHIS we are committed to providing a stimulating language learning environment in which the concepts of cultural identity and of intercultural awareness work in combination.

2. We wish to encourage confident individuals and versatile minds which foster a solid sense of international-mindedness and, gradually, set the ground to create global citizens. With this in mind, languages are handled as tools which allow the daily running of life and the expression of a different point of view on the interpersonal interaction. In addition they represent a moment of reflection on the social/historical background of a specific community enhancing the knowledge of the learners' own community and the opening to new cultures.

3. In other words, languages are used as a stimulus to trigger the curiosity and look "BEYOND", at the international scenario. At the same time languages function as a bridge to join communities and reach a future multicultural society. All this takes into account the students' background knowledge which is expressed by means of their skills, interests and inclination. This represents for the students a form of "*comfort zone*" which teachers will use as initial resource to be decoded in order to build adequate teaching approaches and methods.

4. As we empower MYP learners, we support language development in each student as they make sense of their experiences and construct meaning. We recognise that, since language is central to learning, by means of our skills, experiences and cultural background, at WHIS we are all active participants and share responsibility in the language learning process within our community.

2. Language Policy

We support the development of language firstly through English language and literature, as an international school in the UK. We expect our students to strive to acquire competence in one or more additional languages to be prepared to face the real world within their own native community or to facilitate the integration of new cultures into their own. Students are encouraged to develop a critical view of the environment around them, to explore it and make connections. We see language competence as means to express needs and care for others, and as an opportunity to offer a wider range of options to view and enquire about the world. As a result, languages at WHIS contribute towards a more global vision when students will have to face expected and unexpected circumstances. We aim to

give adequate competence and practice both in the students' mother tongue and in additional languages to create a confident user who, eventually, will be able to handle sophisticated language functions (persuading, expressing/supporting opinions, contradicting, repairing a breakdown in communication etc). This would allow students the use of specific language strategies to express their own views, integrity and honesty.

1. In light of the school principles and taking into account the IB requirements, at WHIS all teachers "virtually" cover the role of language teachers. In addition, we rely on international staff (including administrators and school volunteers) who provide the learners with an extra opportunity to use/practice other languages outside the "classroom" environment (three out of the four languages currently taught are currently spoken within the whole school).

2. Languages are taught meaningfully, using real world scenarios and authentic assessment to embed use of the language into learning. We believe that instruction should be built around problems with clear, correct answers, and around ideas that most students can grasp quickly.

3. Accuracy has, at least in the early years, a secondary priority, leaving space for communication and completion of a task which will be related to a need. This, in our view, will highlight a capable communicator, an independent user who will expect to reach those specific targets that reflect both his/her necessities and his/her way to assist others.

4. In order to follow this method and to respond to the learners' clear preferences, the language class gives emphasis to the practice through role plays, in which real life contexts are simulated. Students are exposed to authentic material: they are encouraged to produce material which will support their own learning process and are given the opportunity for extra practice to enhance their creativity. Some examples include: the creation of a social network profile (basic information on bio and preferences); a menu; the map of a city with places of interest for directions). Examples of their work are presented and used as learning material in the class: this reinforces the sense of cooperative learning.

5. At WHIS we believe that students should be exposed to a wide variety of activities where their background knowledge can be valued, used and expanded. The language teacher should have the function of facilitator and, only when possible, language needs should be scaffolded. We aim to expose students to contexts which, through adequate instruction and repetition, can provide the tools to handle real situations and to develop a critical constructive approach to life issues and to new ideas. It is our final goal to encourage students to think of their own solutions before the teacher's intervention: thinking and reasoning should have high priority.

6. Students are initially assessed on their aptitude to languages, learning methods and on their prior knowledge (when coming from other language learning situations). As a further step, teachers will devise adequate methods and approaches to value such previous knowledge and maximise the potentialities of the students by responding to their preferences and inclinations.

7. At WHIS we are committed to offering a motivating and equitable learning environment where students can receive adequate care in line with their own social, cultural and educational background. We support the learning of languages through enquiry and aim to create an independent user who, by means of exploration and investigation, will make meaning in the world

3. School Language Profile

1. Currently our language profile is 93% English as a mother tongue but we aim to create a multilingual environment that, in conjunction with the development of critical literacy, will foster both cultural identity and international mindedness. We look forward to creating a more diverse linguistic environment.

2. At WHIS the primary language of instruction is English although assessments may be offered both in English and (limited to the European languages taught) in the TL. Proficiency in more than one language contributes to the holistic development of students, giving them access to a broader range of input, experiences and perspectives. Each programme carries its specific learning objectives and its relevant contents for the strands of speaking and listening, reading and writing, viewing and presenting which are appropriate to the students' level and to their learning style. We encourage enquiry-based authentic learning by means of an investigative approach of different genres. In addition we promote task-based assessment in order to give learners a practical and realistic purpose to be achieved as part of their evaluation. Students who are not proficient in the primary language of instruction will be given extensive support and intervention to enable them to access the curriculum.

4. Language Acquisition

1. In Year 7 language is divided into studies in language and literature, English (Language A) and language acquisition courses (Language B). Currently students are required to study one language and are encouraged to take a second one. We can currently offer the opportunity to learn Chinese, French, Italian, German and Spanish. Cultural awareness and understanding play a fundamental part in each lesson. The acquisition of language must be seen as a continuum along which each individual student progresses at his/her own speed and learning style.

2. As students progress through the MYP, vocabulary, contents, and language functions become increasingly sophisticated and appropriate to the context; students are able to produce their own language within a limited

scope and are encouraged to interact with each other and adults.

3. All students will have the knowledge of, and ability to use, at least two languages, but not all of them to the same extent.

5. English Language and Literature A

1. In the MYP all students study English language and literature (Language A). The English A programme includes a detailed linguistic study of English, both in terms of receptive and productive understanding, and the analysis of a large variety of text genres. Students are exposed to material suitable to their level and interest and to language situations which will help them develop a better understanding of literary and cultural texts (spoken, visual and written). In view of their progress towards the Diploma, students are encouraged to develop and use a sense of critical analyses of the text which would eventually set the ground to a competent use of the language (both in spoken and in written responses). In other words, the English A programme aims to develop critical and analytical language skills to be applied to various texts and, at the same time, support the ability to produce a wide range of texts (spoken and written discourses).

2. Incorporating the National Curriculum, language teachers use a variety of practices to foster language development, as appropriate for subject area and grade level. These may include:
   1. Literacy
      • Reading across all subject areas
      • Reading for information and for pleasure
      • Reading using levelled material as appropriate
      • Exposure to a variety of genres, including informational text, trade books, literature, poetry, journals, newspapers and magazines
      • Vocabulary building strategies such as word of the week, the use of idioms, metaphors and similes across the curriculum
      • A language-rich environment, including library
      • Volunteers from other countries.
      • Cooperative learning strategies such as jigsaws, role plays and peer review.
      • The incorporation of reading incentives eg focus book
   2. Written Language
      • Varied, challenging and meaningful writing practice every day, and across all subject areas using a variety of media.
      • Across all subjects, writing should be grammatical, accurate, wide in lexicon and well-structured within context.
      • Students have the opportunity to practise drafting and self-reflection to improve their writing.
      • Consistent and constructive support in the development of ideas through formative marking and feedback from teachers, peers, and other adults.
      • Modelling of the writing process as well as correct usage of language by teachers and other adults.
      • Encouraging writing for different audiences, purposes and in different genres and registers.
      • Spelling and syntactical errors are corrected in line with our literacy marking policy.
      • We advise all students to use Google referencing using APA as part of our blended learning environment.
   3. Oral Language
      • Daily opportunities to develop oral language in a safe environment, inclusive of students varied backgrounds.
      • Speaking and listening activities beyond the everyday classroom instruction, including working together in an outdoor setting and sharing meals together.
      • Encouragement of the development of language beyond everyday conversation through oral presentations, debates, speeches, and role-playing.
      • Modeling correct language usage in conversation with teachers and other adults.
      • Emphasis is given to correct pronunciation with discreet correction.
      • Awareness of the purpose of speaking tasks, moderating language and register accordingly.
   4. Non-Verbal Communication
      • Attentive listening.
      • Appreciating how body language and expression is understood by others and how it can alter meaning.

3. In order to foster love of reading, students are encouraged to use part of their independent study time reading and then to continue this activity at home. Suitable books are regularly purchased and made available from the Library. In addition, a prominently visible board is designated to recommend reading material and resources to students.

4. We support the development of adequate linguistic strategies that will allow students to use languages (A and B) with accuracy and, when necessary, make use of the relevant language functions: presenting, viewing,

expressing/supporting opinion, rephrasing, persuading, presenting/defending policies, providing details, discourse repairing.

5. The understanding and the production of different genres will be supported through the use of multi-media, role-plays, games, debates: using specific texts will work as model to follow and put in practice. All this will, at the same time, offer the opportunity to learn, practice and consolidate vocabulary, sentence construction, format of the text, use of tenses, punctuation and aim, at the higher levels, to teach the clear understanding of language nuances.

6. The production of the written discourse will be guided by the English A teacher who will work with the students in the process of drafting, revising and finalising the text. In this process, students will be encouraged to become more independent by practising self-correction, using grammatical structures with full awareness, correct spelling and all the features of each genre. The final goal is to produce and share with others a coherent text where students use languages (A and B) with competence and appropriateness to the context.

6. Differentiation and Assessment

1. As expected in any educational institution, students at WHIS differ from each other in terms of learning experience, learning method, social skills, and aptitude to a specific subject. As a consequence, particular care is paid to those learners who require a form of differentiation in the teaching method. Teachers will endeavour to respond to the students' need and, if necessary, provide an individually tailored instruction which takes into account specific learning objectives. This takes form through elaborated input where such techniques as redundancy of information, repetition, paraphrasing and slower speech respond to the needs of weaker students. In addition, their learning pace will be assisted through modelling activities consisting in live demonstrations and examples of what the task/class activity requires. The timetable provides for periods of independent study which will give learners the opportunity to revise and consolidate the notions discussed in the class.

2. Students' language needs are determined through an initial analysis and reviewed through an ongoing evaluation (discrete or explicit) throughout the school year. For the MYP, the school has a flexible placement policy that will allow the students' movement into the correct Phase to be based on their choice, new necessities or progression. In their planning and teaching language teachers will incorporate four main concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to become competent users of the language achieving ability to negotiate meaning, recognise patterns, think for themselves and, based on the level of competence, make use of different sub-skills and language functions. The teacher will follow the progress of the students and guide them to see their achievements as a new way to explore oneself and others and, at the same time, to see the language as means of self expressions, with multiple meanings, context driven and with a personal stance ranging for the survival competence to more specific purpose (academic, professional, technical).

3. TEACHERS' TRAINING. At WHIS we foster a culture of language learning: all teachers are language teachers and share the responsibility for the linguistic development of students. In view of this, at WHIS we will offer teachers a series of professional development opportunities which will be scheduled at the beginning of every term. In addition, it is our intention to run short workshops designed for non-teaching staff where language issues are discussed (accuracy, lexis, usage, idioms, pronunciation, and variations of English). More specific training related to the IB criteria will be offered to all new teachers. A yearly update workshop will be run for all teachers with regard to unit planning, creation of assessment tasks, elaborating unit questions, writing tasks, marking scales and strategies to consolidate interdisciplinary continuity.

4. METHODS OF ASSESSMENT Assessment (explicit and discrete) is an essential part of teaching at WHIS: it allows an evaluation of the students' knowledge, of their skills and achievements together with the understanding and attitude/aptitude towards a new culture/language. It also represents a point of reflection and (re)-consideration of the teacher's' approach to teaching, of their teaching techniques and beliefs and of the effectiveness of material used in the class.

   1. The assessment procedure consists of three separate stages:
      1. Pre-assessment: students are assessed to determine their background knowledge, their strengths, interests and areas in need of developing. It will also allow the teacher to devise suitable planning or, if necessary, implement a form of differentiation. This stage is important to highlight the aptitude of the individual student to languages, and to establish what they can do and what they understand.
      2. Formative assessment: usually a mid unit evaluation, it makes a point of the teaching activities, of any progress, and of any gap in the learning process of the students. It is a diagnostic test which highlights strong and weak points in the class and in the teaching, and provides adequate information to consolidate, refine or change particular teaching methods or material. At this stage students receive constructive feedback in form of praise on learning or guidance for a better future performance.
      3. Summative assessment: end of unit evaluation where students will put into practice what was learned during the unit and where they will have to prove understanding and aware use of the notions. This assessment carries final marks based on the IB marking scale.

   2. In addition to the assessment systems above, students from the MYP3 classes onwards are encouraged to use peer or self assessment correction which will support a form of reflection on their approach to learning and promote cooperative learning.

3. Assessment in the MYP is in line with the IB requirements and is linked to a Key Concept, a Related Concept and to a Global Context while bearing in mind the central Statement of Enquiry of the unit. The summative assessment gives the students the opportunity to discuss the Statement of Enquiry and to put into practice what they have learned.
4. Based on the circumstances, Tailored Learning Plans can be developed in order to respond to the specific learning needs of certain students. This may include the modification of the assessment criteria for that student. Should this situation arise, the teacher, the parents, the IB Coordinator and the school counsellor will define the course of action and device adequate assessment papers.

Revision Control Table	
Drawn up by	Toni Marzetti, Rachel Shakeshaft, Nick Shaw
Date	01/09/17
Review schedule	Minimum of every two years
Reviewed	03/09/18 (led by Daniel Sturdy); 01/09/20 (DS); 10/09/22 by DS; 10/09/24 by DS
Next Review	01/12/26