

## ESOL

We started the year with quite a small number of students (classes were on average about 6) and this grew with a steady trickle of new arrivals through the year. Most of the students this year were not beginners, but students at 1 or 2 (some higher) of the ELLP proficiency matrix. Thus there was quite a churn as students arrived, found their feet and were assessed as ready to enter mainstream wholly or partially. Altogether about 33 students attended ESOL classes for varying amounts of time.

### ESOL Verification visit

On November 7 The ESOL verifier, Rosemary Gillis, visited and wrote quite a critical report. Subsequently, the main points made were:

- Only a small proportion of ELLs were being catered for in the ESOL programme.
- Only newly arrived ELLs have diagnostic testing, and only funded ELLs are assessed using the ELLP tool (which some teachers will not be expert at using).
- There are gaps in the identification and enrolment procedures for ELLs
- Provisions for all ELLs, especially those in the senior school, need to be reviewed to ensure they are prepared as well as possible for the CAAs

### Response:

- Currently we run a reception/transition class. It takes (in theory, some students still fall through the gaps) ALL students who arrive at the school from a non-English-speaking background. This is so we can meet them, get them on our books (as there is no procedure in place to alert us otherwise to ELLs), and have a chance to assess them using a variety of tools, after which we recommend the next stage for them, whether that is continued full-time ESOL, part-time ESOL or full-time mainstream, depending on their proficiency and confidence. We also have in this class some students who are not new to the country, but whose English proficiency has been assessed as low. They attend these mixed-level classes for typically one to three timetable lines. We stand by these mixed-ability classes as we believe the students gain more than they lose by sharing their learning with students at different language levels.
- However, we do agree that there is plenty of room for further provision for the English Language Learners in the school. It would be good to run literacy-focussed classes for ELLs at stage 2-3 on the ELLP matrix. Models proposed by Rosemary would require a big investment by the school in staffing and rooming. We would probably have to run two or three classes simultaneously across the whole timetable to cater fully for these students.
- We take on board the criticisms regarding ELL identification, enrolment procedures and testing. These are areas the department will work on in 2024 both internally and in collaboration with College administration.