



## Guide to languages case study The Anglo School, Uruguay

The Anglo School in Montevideo was founded in 2001 by the Instituto Cultural Anglo Uruguayo (ICAU). Most learners and teachers speak Spanish as their first language. Spanish is also used outside the school and in the community.

The school has students aged 2 to 16 and follows two curricula: the Spanish department follows the Uruguayan National Curriculum and the English department programme is based on the Cambridge curriculum. The departments coordinate with each other to make sure the school delivers a coherent whole-school programme. At early years and primary level in particular, the school has worked hard to make sure that the programmes complement each other, rather than overlap.

When the school first adopted Cambridge programmes, the two departments carefully analysed both programmes and decided which topics would be delivered in Spanish and which would be delivered in English. They also identified topics that would benefit from being dealt with in both languages, to help reinforce the concepts. It was decided that the Spanish department would introduce the topic then the English department would reinforce and consolidate. It has used this approach particularly in teaching maths.

When choosing subjects to teach in English at secondary level, the school opted for subjects that allow for the development of a wider range of language but that do not overlap with what is being taught in Spanish. This makes it more motivating for students as they are learning new topics both in Spanish and in English.

### Approach to English

The Anglo School aims to expose students to as much English as possible, not only during class time but also at break time and lunch. English teachers are also encouraged to use English among themselves.

The early years programme focuses on exposing students to English through a variety of teacher-led activities including storytelling, songs, rhymes, games and role-plays. There is strong emphasis on oracy and English teachers are encouraged to speak to the children in English practically all the time. By offering a meaningful, enjoyable and attractive first contact with English, students can gradually start developing their use of English as a second language for communication.



At primary level, in addition to language lessons, the subjects of history, science, global perspectives and drama are all taught in English. Music lessons are bilingual, with some songs taught in English and others in Spanish. The class teacher is in charge of delivering both language and content, but there are specialised teachers for drama and music. In total, the school offers around 17 hours of classes in English per week.

The secondary programme is similar. In addition to language lessons, the subjects of history, literature, business and global perspectives are all taught in English. Secondary students have around 13 hours of lessons in English per week.

### Support for students

To maximise students' opportunities to speak English, many lessons taught in English have students working in small groups. Teachers come up with many different strategies to encourage students to stick to English while working in groups – the most important one is to make sure students have language frames to help them. When necessary, language support is provided by assistant teachers.

The school uses a blended learning approach. Its online platform for primary and secondary levels provides tasks and reference material based on students' performance and gives teachers a detailed analysis of their students' language skills so they can plan accordingly.

Primary students who are struggling with language attend coaching classes two or three times a week. These classes are personalised, small group lessons focusing on areas of difficulty. The coach teacher also works in the classroom during regular lessons, supporting lower level students. The coach teacher plans lessons together with the class teacher, identifying tasks that need scaffolding and preparing differentiated learning activities when necessary.

Younger students may be encouraged to express themselves in Spanish while the teacher answers or mirrors what they say in English. The school believes that allowing them to use their first language helps them gain confidence as learners. As their language repertoire grows and they become more confident, they stop resorting to their first language and use only English during the lessons taught in English.

Teachers also use a lot of realia, visuals and hands-on activities to ensure that learners are able to grasp the concepts worked on.



## Learner assessment

The school combines Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge International exams at different levels. Cambridge English exams are optional but the school encourages students to take exams as it sees external evaluation as important feedback for teachers.

Cambridge Primary Checkpoint is compulsory for all students at the end of Cambridge Primary. Most students sit English as a First Language, and those with a lower level of English take English as a Second Language.

For secondary students, the diagnostic report the school receives from the Cambridge Checkpoint tests is a useful tool. The report is analysed by the school's academic coordinators and teachers to identify both group and individual strengths and weaknesses – this is then taken into account in the teacher's annual plan. At the end of their secondary education, most students take Cambridge IGCSE™.

## Self-reflection and professional development

A key characteristic of the school is its constant self-reflection and evaluation, both individually and as a team, to identify areas of improvement. This has pushed the school to innovate in different ways.

Teachers have time for planning together and for selecting and adapting resources.

The school provides teachers with a variety of continuous professional development opportunities. Before the beginning of the school year, for example, it holds workshops that focus on aspects that were identified as weaknesses the previous year or on innovations/changes it wants to implement. Past workshops have focused on formative assessment, active learning and differentiation.

The school also enables teachers to participate in Cambridge International and Cambridge English online and face-to-face development courses and webinars on the above areas, as well as introductory/enrichment training in their subjects of expertise. Visit: [www.theangloschool.edu.uy](http://www.theangloschool.edu.uy)

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