

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

1. Introduction

St. George's Catholic School warmly welcomes children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). The school recognises that being a speaker of more than one language has many benefits and we celebrate the wide array of cultural, linguistic and educational experiences that EAL pupils bring to the classroom. We encourage all our children to aim for the highest possible standards, and we take account of each child's individual needs and experiences.

We recognise that the needs and language abilities of EAL learners will vary, from those who speak little English to those who are fluent. We also recognise that for children who are learning English as an additional language, their ability to participate in the full curriculum may well be in advance of their current ability to communicate in English.

Research suggests (despite some commonly held beliefs to the contrary) that being a speaker of more than one language is not a disadvantage to educational achievement; multilingualism is associated with success. This school recognises the importance of home and community languages in their own right, and the ability of their speakers to acquire other languages.

EAL pupils at St. George's Catholic School have access to the full curriculum, and learn English by accessing all learning opportunities with their peers. Our aim is to provide quality first classroom-based teaching, along with some targeted small group input and, where necessary, individual support based on children's needs.

2. Statement of Aims and Commitment

The purpose of this policy is to outline the school's approach to meeting the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This is in line with the requirements of the Race Relations Act (1976). We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all learners for whom English is an additional language by delivering a broad, balanced curriculum, which reflects the needs of children for whom English is an additional language, and by enabling EAL pupils to acquire the language skills needed to reach their full academic potential.

3. Context

According to the Government 'A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. (DfE Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics July 2020).

At St. George's Catholic School, around 65% of pupils are EAL and there are over 25 languages and 20 countries represented amongst the children. These range from pupils who have little or no English to pupils who are fluent in English.

4. Key Responsibilities and Staff Development

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure the development of pupils with EAL and our aim is to equip teachers and support staff with the necessary skills, resources and knowledge to support pupils with EAL. We have an EAL Co-ordinator (Mrs McNamara) who is responsible for:

- Overseeing the in-school provision
- Working with teachers to identify pupils with EAL who would benefit from additional input to develop their language skills

We also have an EAL Lead (Mrs Roberts) who will:

- Assess and monitor the language skills of EAL pupils

- Work with EAL pupils across the school
- Support other staff in meeting the needs of EAL children within the classroom.

All teachers and support staff will support EAL pupils by:

- Ensuring the inclusion of pupils with EAL in their classrooms
- Considering the needs of EAL pupils as they plan and deliver lessons
- Providing resources to support EAL pupils' understanding and language development

The school accesses training and support from Somerset's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the EAL Lead also disseminates latest research about best practice to staff through staff meetings.

5. Key Principles for Second Language Acquisition

We recognise that pupils will learn best in an environment where they feel comfortable and so our first priority for new EAL pupils is that they are warmly welcomed, settle into the classroom and feel like they belong. We do this by setting new pupils up with buddies who offer friendship and explain school routines, and by providing visual materials such as a visual timetable and survival vocabulary.

Research suggests that those new to English will acquire conversational fluency within two years, but will need five years or longer to achieve competence in academic English.

The best place for EAL learners to learn is within their current year group with mainstream teaching and learning experiences most of the time. This enables them to develop oral fluency quickly, immediately feel part of the school, develop language in context and experience their full curriculum entitlement.

EAL learners who are new to English also benefit from strategies to support them to access the learning such as using practical objects and visuals, and using graphic organisers to complete work. Tasks may be adapted to enable pupils to access the subject content and level of challenge with a lower demand for language, for example through sorting, sequencing, labelling and matching activities. At times, pupils may use their first language to support their learning, for example, by discussing concepts with other students and staff, translating key words, using translated materials or completing the task in their first language.

We also recognise the value of some targeted small group input and individual support with a clear language focus such as:

- Pre-teaching key vocabulary for topics
- Practical, everyday English
- Phonics and reading
- Speaking and listening
- Sentence structure

6. EAL Teaching and Learning

In our school, teachers use a wide variety of methods and approaches to help children who are learning English as an additional language.

They help them to develop their spoken and written English by:

- ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meanings
- covering not just key words, but also metaphors and idioms
- explaining how spoken and written English have different uses for different purposes
- modelling the fluent use of English
- providing them with a range of reading materials, to exemplify the different ways in which English is used
- giving them appropriate opportunities for talking, and using talking to support writing
- modelling writing for different text types
- encouraging them to relate one language to another

They ensure their access to the curriculum and to assessment by:

- using texts and materials that suit their ages and learning stages
- providing support through ICT, video and audio materials, dictionaries and translators, readers and amanuenses
- using the home or first language where appropriate

In the Foundation Stage (Reception Class) we provide opportunities for children to develop their English, and we provide a wide variety of support to help them take part in activities.

The Foundation Stage helps children learning English as an additional language by:

- building on their experience of acquiring language at home and in the wider community, so that this experience supports their developing use of English
- providing a range of opportunities for them to engage in English speaking and listening activities, with peers and with adults
- providing bilingual support to extend vocabulary
- providing opportunities for children to hear their home languages, as well as English
- providing high quality phonics and early reading teaching through a rigorous teaching scheme (Little Wandle phonics) which uses phonetically decodable quality text to support home learning

7. Planning, Monitoring, Assessment and Record Keeping

When pupils start in Reception class, parents will have the opportunity to complete an EAL Parent Form to identify that their child is learning English as an additional language. The EAL lead will then carry out an informal assessment to gauge each pupil's English ability in speaking and listening according to the five points on the EAL Skills Framework: New to English, Early Acquisition, Developing Competence, Competent or Fluent. This is carried out with the purpose of providing the most appropriate provision for each pupil.

When new EAL pupils arrive further up the school, parents will be invited to complete an EAL Parent Form and have the opportunity to request to meet with the EAL Co-ordinator for a School Entry Meeting to discuss the pupil's educational and language background. After approximately two weeks, the EAL Lead will carry out an informal assessment to assess the skills and needs of pupils in relation to speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is carried out to ensure the pupil receives appropriate support in learning English.

For all EAL pupils in the school, class teachers use a range of assessments to measure attainment and progress. These are also used to identify which pupils might benefit from additional language small group or individual support. This support will have a specific focus for a term and progress will be reviewed at the end of the term.

The EAL Lead will keep records of EAL pupils, language levels and interventions they have received.

8. Special Educational Needs

A pupil is not regarded to have Special Educational Needs (SEN) because they are learning English as an additional language. However, some EAL pupils may have SEN and, in such cases, pupils will have equal access to our school SEN provision, in addition to EAL support. EAL pupils with a Special Educational Need or Disability will be identified as part of normal assessment procedures as outlined in our SEND Policy.

9. Resources

Our school library has a dual-language section with books in a number of languages that pupils can access. We also have some dual-language dictionaries. Pupils will also be able to use laptops and iPads for translation. Staff also have access to some curriculum resources in a range of different languages.

The school has a designated EAL base with resources and games to support the learning of English. Our aim is to ensure all children's languages, cultures and identities are represented in classrooms and throughout the school.

Our online reading scheme, Bug Club, has a 'read to me' function to support families who are unable to read to and with children at home in English. Our Reading Scheme and Guided Reading texts have been chosen to provide a broad range of quality and engaging materials to interest our EAL learners by broadening their vocabulary and helping increase their understanding of the world.

10. Parent/Carers and the Wider Community

Liaison between parents/carers and teachers is vital to create a strong home/school partnership in the best interests of pupils. Teachers will meet with parents twice a year to inform them of progress made and discuss strategies to support the children. Parents are welcome to bring someone to help with translation where necessary. Written reports are also sent home at the end of the school year.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school through attending class assemblies, mass, school plays and concerts, sports days and fundraising events.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning through reading with children at home, supporting their child with homework, and discussing new learning in their first language.

We also provide support for parents through Twitter, our school website and Google Docs, with resources such as phonics videos, vocabulary sharing, and how to hear children read at home.