



BLENHEIM
SCHOOLS

English as an additional language policy

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Effective Date: 01 September 2025

Review Cycle: Annually

Responsible Persons: Director of Inclusion and All Staff

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how we support pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) to thrive both academically and socially. Our aim is to ensure that every child has access to high-quality teaching, appropriate support, and meaningful opportunities to learn English while continuing to value and build upon their first language and cultural heritage.

We believe that a rich and supportive school environment, underpinned by inclusive practices, helps children with EAL to gain confidence, develop fluency in English, and succeed across the full curriculum.

2. Definition

At our school, the term *English as an Additional Language* (EAL) refers to pupils who are exposed to or use a language other than English at home or in their community. This broad definition includes children at every stage of bilingualism, from those newly arrived with little or no English to those who are developing fluency but continue to use another language at home.

We acknowledge that pupils' experiences of language and education before joining our school will vary widely. Some may already have a high level of English fluency, while others may be encountering English for the first time. We also recognise the importance of maintaining and valuing each pupil's first language. Continued use of the home language supports a child's sense of identity, strengthens family relationships, and contributes positively to their overall cognitive and linguistic development.

Partnership with parents is central to this process. Parents are encouraged to continue speaking and reading in their first language, as this provides a strong foundation for further language acquisition.



3. Statement of Intent

We are committed to ensuring that:

- Pupils are **not identified as having a learning difficulty** solely on the basis that their home language is not English.
- Additional support for English language development is provided where appropriate, tailored to the needs of individual pupils.
- Older pupils with very limited English may be recommended to undertake a short, focused programme of intensive tuition before starting school, to support their transition.
- All pupils, regardless of their language background, are given **equal access to a broad, balanced, and stimulating curriculum**.
- Pupils are encouraged to use and celebrate their first languages, recognising their role in shaping personal identity and enriching the school community.
- The school actively promotes **equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice**, celebrating differences and addressing individual needs in line with our Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policy.

4. Aims and Objectives

Our policy aims to:

- Welcome and respect the cultural, linguistic, and personal experiences of every child with EAL.
- Protect and build upon each child's self-esteem by acknowledging and celebrating their cultural identity and home language.
- Ensure that effective strategies are in place to help pupils with EAL access the full curriculum.
- Support pupils in developing the confidence and fluency to communicate effectively in English.

To support these aims, staff will:

- Collect and share information about each child's background, including languages spoken, religion, cultural customs, and any personal needs.
- Communicate openly with parents, emphasising that the school values and celebrates the wide range of languages and cultures represented in our community.



- Establish clear and consistent routines, reinforced with visual aids, repetition, and one-to-one explanations as needed.
- Use a variety of strategies to aid understanding and learning, including visual prompts, gestures, pictures, and objects.
- Respond positively to all attempts at communication, recognising that children often understand more than they can yet express.
- Model appropriate, correct use of English in interactions, ensuring repetition and positive reinforcement are used consistently.
- Identify opportunities to teach and reinforce essential vocabulary and sentence structures, embedding these across lessons and activities.
- Plan for children with EAL to participate regularly in small-group activities, where they can interact meaningfully with peers and develop communication skills in a supportive environment.
- Understand and support children who may go through a “silent period” before speaking English, or who may feel reluctant to use their home language in school. During this time, staff will model language through commentary and supportive talk.
- Make use of bilingual staff, where available, to ease communication and help pupils manage linguistic challenges.
- Recognise and value non-verbal responses as meaningful communication, extending them into fuller English sentences when appropriate.

5. Implementation in Practice

We ensure that support for EAL pupils is practical, consistent, and tailored to their needs. This includes:

- Collecting detailed information during admission
- Monitoring each pupil's progress closely, adapting provision and support where necessary in partnership with parents. Reports are issued at the end of each term
- Encouraging peer-to-peer interaction as a powerful means of learning. Where possible, new pupils are paired with a “buddy” or mentor to help them settle in, and families are always encouraged to arrange informal meet-ups



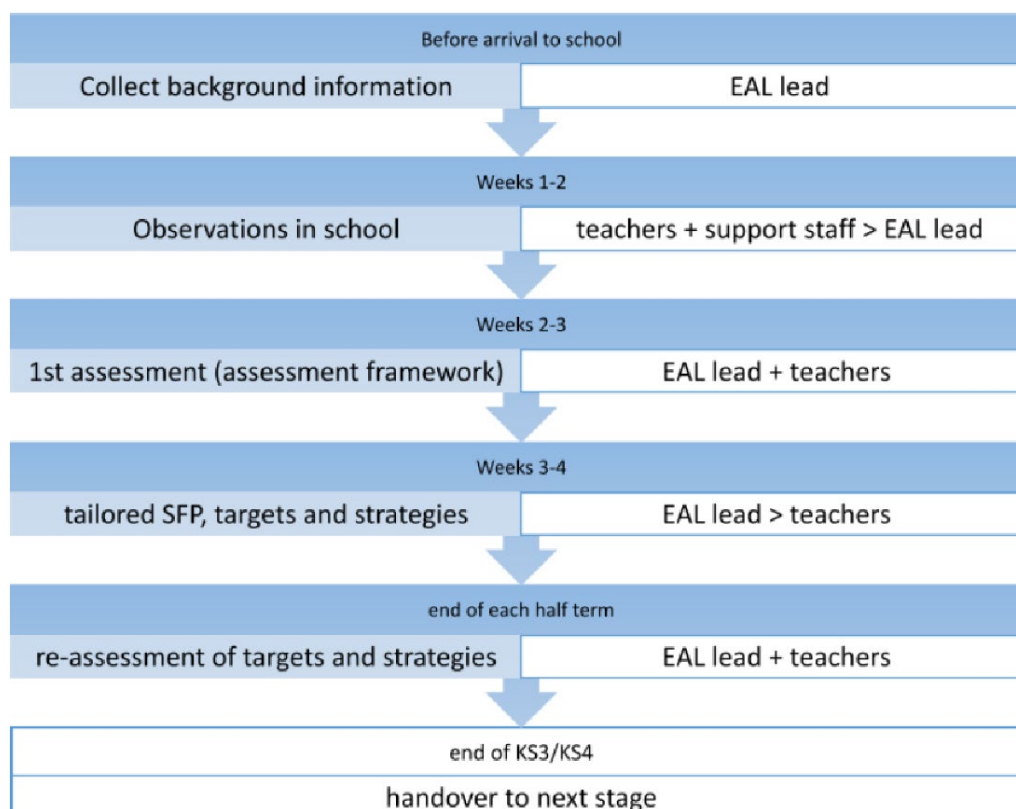
6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Director of Inclusion:** Ensure this policy is implemented effectively, monitor its impact, and review it regularly.
- **Staff Team:** Apply strategies consistently, monitor and record progress, and provide feedback to SLT and parents.
- **Parents and Carers:** Work in partnership with the school, supporting their child's learning at home while maintaining and valuing their home language.



FAQ:

- **Should EAL pupils be in literacy programmes until their English is good enough to be in other lessons?** No. The English national curriculum does not set out statutory programmes of study to guide teachers through planning for progression and continuity for EAL pupils. So strategies to promote English acquisition must be incorporated into normal curriculum learning. If EAL pupils could catch-up sufficiently to achieve at a given level, the class will have moved on to a higher level by the time they get there. Moreover, the kind of language needed to succeed in mainstream subjects is most effectively taught actually in those mainstream subject classes. In mainstream classes, language is contextualised in meaningful ways and is regularly recycled.
- **Should home languages (mother-tongues) be kept separate from the language used at school?**
No. A strong home language is a good predictor of a strong additional language. In addition, pupils who have been to school in another country possess valuable curriculum knowledge processed in that language.
- **The EAL pupil doesn't seem to improve much their proficiency of English. Is this normal?**
Yes. EAL pupils take between 6-7 years to master the language. However, they may develop one skill faster than another. For example, they may develop their reading skills faster than their listening.
- **Can they do tests and exams?**
In the first stages, no. EAL pupils should be assessed on their understanding of content, but in ways that are adapted to their level of English proficiency. Tests designed for monolingual English-speaking children are not appropriate for EAL pupils. Using such tests may result in pupils appearing to know less than they actually do.



EAL INDUCTION PROGRAMME: PROCESS

Collecting background information:

What kind of background information should be collated?

- their country of origin
- their home language
- the literacy practices of the family
- their family environment
- their previous schooling
- their strengths
- their level of academic attainment in their previous school
- how long they have been learning English and their attitudes towards learning English.

Who should collate this information?

- The EAL Lead should ask the parents and the pupils.

When should this information be collated?

- Ideally, before the arrival of the pupil to the school, but as soon as possible.

Why do we need this information?

- To help teachers to understand the potential needs of these pupils and to develop an understanding of their existing levels of achievement.

Observations in school:

What do these observations consist of?

- Personal and social context:
- We need to have first-hand information about how the pupil is settling in school. Are they making friends? What type of friends (same culture/language? Appropriate, beneficial friendships?) How do they interact? etc.
- Family context:
- We need to have information regarding the transition into our school. Are the parents supporting the pupil? Is attendance good? Does the pupil attend an additional/first-language school?

Who will carry out these observations?

- Any member of staff who works closely with the pupil. The information will be sent to the corresponding EAL lead.

When will these observations take place?

- They should start after the settling-in period which normally takes about 1 or 2 weeks.

Why do we need to do these observations?

- This is the first step of the assessment process. Once we know this information, we can put in place strategies that will be reflected in the pupil's SFP, for example: providing the pupil and the family with additional school information, or if the pupil needs to be buddied with other sensitive pupils.

The assessment framework:

What do we need to assess and what does the assessment consist of?

- We need to assess the level of English proficiency of the EAL pupil. The DfE levels of English proficiency for EAL pupils are the following:
 - A. New to English: May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.
 - B. Early acquisition: May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.
 - C. Developing competence: May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.
 - D. Competent: Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

E. Fluent: Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

- The 4 aspects of the language (listening & understanding, reading, speaking and writing) will be assessed and a level will be given to each aspect. They don't necessarily need to be the same level. For example, the pupil may show a level A in writing but a B in speaking.

Who needs to carry out this assessment?

- The EAL lead will organise it but the teachers will collaborate so that we have a better picture of what the pupil is able to do.

When does this assessment need to be carried out?

- In the 2nd or 3rd week after the pupil's arrival to school.

Why do we need this assessment framework?

- There are a number of frameworks that we could use but we have chosen the Solihull assessment framework because it is very simple and straightforward in providing targets and strategies.

Creation of a tailored EAL iSAMS profile:

What is an EAL profile?

- The EAL profile will summarise the information we have of the EAL pupil and best to support them.

i.Re-assessment:

What will the re-assessment consist of and **who** will carry it out?

- The EAL lead will contact the members of staff that closely work with the pupil and will ask them to answer the following questions:
 - Do you consider the level this EAL pupil to be in is appropriate?
 - Do you think the targets have been achieved?
 - Have the proposed strategies been effective?
 - Do you have any concerns about their reading, writing or listening skills within the EAL framework?
 - What changes, if any, are needed?
- b. **When** will the pupil be re-assessed?
 - At the end of every half-term.
- c. **Why** do we need to re-assess the pupil?
 - Ideally, the pupil will have improved their English proficiency and therefore, targets must be adjusted. In case the pupil has not improved at all, strategies will be adjusted.
 - After the EAL SFP has been adjusted, the new targets and strategies will be notified to the relevant members of staff.

EAL LEARNER LEVELS WITH DfE PROFICIENCY

DESCRIPTORS:

EAL learner (DfE Proficiency)	EAL level	Listening & understanding	Speaking	Reading	Writing
A – New to English	Step 1	Understands home language	Silent period Speaks in home language	Minimal/no literacy in English	Minimal/no literacy in English
	Step 2	Watches and joins in routines/activities Follows instructions using key words/gestures Follows short sequences of instructions	Non-verbal gestures Echoes words/expressions Simple naming vocabulary Basic, formulaic spoken exchanges Unclear pronunciation	Awareness of print and able to recognise some words e.g. own name Starts to recognise letters and symbols Early reading skills e.g. CVC words	May be able to write in first language. Holds pen correctly – begins to form letters, then words. Writes some HFW words Can draw and label diagrams Begin to write simple sentences
B – Early Acquisition	Step 3	Can indicate when they need to hear something again	Simple questions e.g. where?	Able to demonstrate and understand basic punctuation	Handwriting legible and correctly orientated
	Step 4	Listens attentively during lessons Understand function of time connectives Understands some teacher questions with visual support	Over-generalisation of grammatical rules Simple positional language Re-tell a simple story Can give a sequence of instructions Past simple tense emerging	Can read simple sentences Refers to visual clues in texts Re-tell main points from a text. Identifies dialogue in texts. Follows pronoun references in texts	Writes familiar words with phonic knowledge. Uses some basic punctuation Uses simple present tense and some simple past tense Range of vocabulary including some conjunctions.
C – Developing Competence	Step 5	Follow set of oral instructions	Speaks in simple every day exchanges	Describes setting of a story	Plurals, prepositions, pronouns and articles used with increased accuracy.
	Step 6	Differentiates past/future/present	Uses common colloquialisms		