English as a Second Language (EAL) Policy

Reviewed by:	Monique Evans – EAL Coordinator	September 2025
Approved by:	Trish Watt -Headmistress	September 2025
Governor Approval:	Suzie Longstaff	September 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026	

Introduction

The term English as an Additional Language (EAL) is used when referring to pupils whose main language at home is a language other than English.

The government definition of an EAL learner includes anyone who has been exposed to a language other than English during early childhood (usually in their first three years) and continues to be exposed to and use this language at home or in their community. EAL learners might have access to more than one language at home; however, this does not necessarily imply full fluency in those languages.

A pupil will not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught. However, pupils for whom English is an additional language will be provided with appropriate support, provided they meet the school's academic criteria.

This policy refers to EAL pupils who are in need of support due to their EAL needs, i.e. beginners in English through to advanced and proficient bilingual learners.

The EAL policy sets out the school's aims, objectives, responsibilities and strategies with regards to the needs and skills of EAL pupils who need differentiated support in class and EAL specialist support out of class.

We aim to ensure that EAL pupils are able to:
- Use English confidently and competently;
- Use English as a means of learning across the curriculum;
- Where appropriate, make use of their knowledge of other languages.

Responsibilities of the School

- To have a clearly outlined EAL policy;
- To welcome and value the cultural, educational and linguistic experiences that pupils with EAL bring to the school;
- To implement school-wide strategies to ensure that EAL pupils are supported in accessing the curriculum and are fully integrated in school life;
- To identify pupils with EAL, assess their needs and skills, give appropriate support, monitor their progress and to intervene should this progress fall below expectations;
- To equip staff with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to support and monitor EAL pupils, and to provide training in effective planning and teaching;

- To support all staff involved in teaching EAL pupils to liaise regularly to promote the sharing of relevant information;

- Any bullying of which the school becomes aware will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

EAL Assessment

Eaton Square Prep School uses assessments for several reasons. During admissions, if it is determined that the child may not be able to access our standard admissions assessments, the EAL department will conduct informal and formal assessments to determine the current level of English and the support that will be needed.

When an EAL pupil first joins Eaton Square Prep School, the EAL team will meet with them to establish their English proficiency based on the Bell foundation's EAL assessment framework. For primary students, the assessment covers the four language skills in English - reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Testing may include using Flash Academy (an online assessment tool) that involves assessing phonic knowledge, word recognition, grammar knowledge, oral comprehension, spelling and writing skills and reading skills.

Informal testing may also be used during assessment such as holding conversations about likes and interests, asking for writing samples or reading a story. Similarly, in EYFS, students will be observed during activities and assessed against age appropriate milestones from the Bell framework such as listening and responding to instructions, showing sustained attention etc.

Based on the result of the EAL assessment, the EAL Coordinator/EAL teacher discuss student needs with teachers and families. If agreed, The EAL pupil is timetabled for personalised EAL support. This may include in class support or EAL specialist lessons out of class.

Summative and continuous assessment of areas of need such as reading, writing and spelling is conducted during these sessions to enable effective planning for learning.

EAL Support

EAL support can take many forms. For instance, upon starting, new students may be provided with 'social stories' about their new classroom or 'survival language' lanyards to help them communicate basic needs. Once assessed, students may receive one of several types of support:
1) In class support
2) Small group support/lessons
3) One- to- one EAL lessons

All support is highly individualised ranging from beginning language instruction (greetings, basic vocabulary, letter and sound recognition) to more nuanced consolidation of language such as understanding idioms or using literacy devices in writing.

In the case of EAL lessons, these are during school hours and happen instead of other timetabled lessons. The planning of lessons always prioritises ensuring that EAL children are working towards age-related expectations. High priority is placed on the acquisition of a strong grammatical understanding and a broad vocabulary. Both aspects are essential in developing academic English once children have grasped the fundamentals of the

English language.

In summary, the EAL lessons aim to teach and/or pre-teach general and subject-specific vocabulary and grammar, to develop pupils' basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) as well as their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English. All four language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening are being developed through vocabulary and grammar exercises, spelling and writing tasks, reading comprehensions, oral practice etc.

The EAL team supports all teaching staff with advice for differentiated planning and EAL strategies in class.

EAL support incurs an additional cost to parents which is clearly explained once the child is added to the EAL register. Parents are made aware of all the costs, prior to the commencement of the EAL lessons, as parents' consent is sought by the EAL coordinator.

The EAL team discusses the EAL pupils' progress with the class teachers and parents regularly.

Ongoing Tracking/ Record Keeping for EAL Learners

The EAL team maintains an EAL register, which identifies all EAL pupils who need support due to their EAL needs, e.g. individual, in groups, in or out of class.

For pupils in the Early Years and KS1, EAL progress tracking sheets (based on the Bell Foundation framework) are used at the end of each term. This clearly indicates what EAL pupils can do and what their next language targets might be.

For KS2 pupils, a range of data is collected. For instance, we use an online tracker for reading (via Raz Kids) and spelling levels (via Words their way assessments) This information is kept along with an overall proficiency level from A-E based on the Bell Foundation framework. This overall language acquisition level is established via tracking sheets or the digital platform Flash Academy.

EAL pupils also have a physical, termly EAL folder as a working record of progress. Both the online and physical records provide evidence of the following:
- Initial assessments;
- Samples of EAL children's work;
- any unaided/independent EAL written work;
- EAL reports.

Admitting New Bilingual/ Multilingual Pupils

We aim to collect and record the below additional information for EAL pupils:
- Country of origin;
- Date of arrival in the UK;
- Pupil's first language;
- Pupil's level of English;
- Other languages spoken at home;
- Pupil's level of literacy in these languages;
- Pupil's previous educational background;

Responsibilities of the EAL Department

Responsibilities of the EAL department include:

- Identifying the presence and needs of EAL pupils;
- Assessing, tracking and monitoring the progress of all EAL pupils who need support;
- Devising EAL programs appropriate for the age, needs and level of English of the EAL pupils and also covering basic subject-specific vocabulary linking it with the class planning;
- Offering EAL support to EAL pupils during school hours, either individually or in small groups, in or out of the classroom;
- Timetabling EAL lessons and ensuring that no key subjects are missed (unless in the interest of the student);
- Resource provision - collecting, suggesting, modifying or designing specific resources to support the learning of EAL pupils in and out of class and supporting class teachers with advice and strategies for differentiation for EAL in class;
- Supporting all teaching staff with advice for differentiated planning and EAL strategies as well as providing in-house EAL training in staff meetings and on inset days;
- Maintaining and updating an EAL register of EAL pupils who need and receive support;
- Managing EAL data of nationalities and languages in the school;
- Celebrating and promoting all languages in the school through events, displays and community partnerships.

Teaching & Learning Strategies

The EAL department and the School support all teaching staff to:

- Plan for and provide appropriate support for language development of all EAL pupils;
- Provide appropriate differentiated activities and extra support, where necessary, in whole class and small group sessions;
- Encourage EAL pupils to use English by generating opportunities for active participation in lessons, including verbal and written practice;
- Consider staff's own language use and provide suitable contextual cues for EAL pupils;
- Be aware that our School's culture and environment may differ from the school's culture that the EAL pupils are familiar with;
- Plan for and provide specific time for support for pupils with EAL needs;
- Be aware that EAL pupils' social language (normally acquired in around 2 to 5 years) may be much more advanced than their academic language (which can take 5 to 7 years to reach native-speaker levels);
- Teach topic/subject relevant vocabulary where appropriate and provide curriculum- related opportunities to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills;
- Provide good language and behaviour role models for social interaction in learning activities;
- When necessary, provide spoken and written, curriculum-specific, language models for EAL pupils to develop their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP);
- Provide a happy, safe and intellectually challenging learning environment;
- Support language development through sensitive and informative verbal feedback and marking in books on grammatical accuracy, social rules of use (formality, politeness, register etc), genre features and characteristics (narrative, reports, essays, formal writing etc);
- Encourage parents' participation and involving parents in EAL pupils' learning;

Role of Teaching Staff
All teaching staff are responsible for language teaching; pupils learn another language best when they are engaged and involved in learning through purposeful cognitive stimuli for both general and academic English language learning.

EAL pupils should be given supported access to schoolwork at an appropriate level. Homework and weekly spellings should be appropriately differentiated.

There are various ways in which this can be achieved:

- Teachers need to be aware of pupils' language needs and the importance of using accessible language in the form of clear worksheets/texts/instructions, and plenty of visual support;
- Where possible, information on new topics should be sent home in advance where words can be translated and practiced with parents in the home language, and topics can be discussed at ease in pupils' home languages;
- Use a buddy system wherever necessary;
- Front seating for all EAL pupils with easy access to the teacher and the board;
- Try to learn some basic greetings and words in pupils' home languages;
- Learn to pronounce and spell foreign names correctly;
- Be mindful, where possible, of any cultural and linguistic differences eg. traditions, routines, behaviour expectations etc.
- Give pupils a routine for the day with visual support.

Placement in Classes/ Teaching Sets

We recognise that EAL pupils, who may be new to English and to the UK, need continuity and security as they start school. We therefore aim to make an early decision about teaching group/class placement.

All EAL pupils should:
- have access to the whole curriculum;
- be integrated in school life as early and as quickly as possible;
- be taught with their peers in their age-appropriate class;
- be placed in groups/sets where they will see models of good behaviour and language;
- be placed in groups with fluent English speakers who will provide them with good language models;
- be placed in as high a set as possible i.e. with their intellectual/academic equals;
- not be automatically placed with Learning Support (SEND) pupils;

Speaking English & Pupil's Home Languages in School

Eaton Square Prep School acknowledges and plans for the needs of all EAL pupils. The school encourages pupils to speak English in lessons and at lunch times as well as their home languages to support their learning and understanding of English.

Where possible, the EAL pupil will have one or two allocated 'buddies' who they can talk to in their home language to explain instructions/activities and pass on information as necessary. In social situations (garden or park), pupils are encouraged to speak in their home language as well as in English to foster and encourage social interaction.

Partnership with Parents

Good relationships with parents are essential if the EAL pupil is to succeed. Parents should be made aware of the difficulties their child is facing and the time frames for learning English (conversational and academic) should also be outlined. Parents are an invaluable resource in helping their children to expand their cognitive

development, while they are learning English at school. Where appropriate, the EAL team and/or the class teacher should give suggestions on how to help the EAL pupil at home.

Ideas for helping children at home:
- Play dates with English speaking children to provide good language models;
- English versions of child-friendly and educational computer games and board games; educational programmes on TV, e.g. CBBC
- Stories in English; audio books;
- Bilingual story books;
- Translating concepts learnt at school into home language;
- Exploring upcoming topics in home language before discussing and learning in class;
- Speaking/Talking Dictionaries;
- Reading books in English and in the home language;
- Educational apps and websites for learning vocabulary and grammar in English;

Any concerns about the wellbeing of a pupil with EAL should be referred to the relevant members of staff.
If the School has reasons to suspect that a pupil with EAL may also have special educational needs, the Parents and the School will refer to the sections in the SEND policy.

The following members of staff are responsible for the provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language:
Monique Evans, EAL Coordinator and EAL teacher
Jo Gray, EAL teacher, Early years and KS1

Appendix 1 – Strategies for Supporting EAL Pupils in Class

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access:
- Collaborative group work;
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing;
- Additional verbal support - repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support;
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc;
- Bilingual resources, e.g. dictionaries, on-line support, bilingual staff/pupils, texts, key word lists;
- Writing frames for scaffolded support;
- Opportunities for role play;
- Information on new topics should be sent home in advance where words can be translated and practiced with parents in the home language.
- Pupils receive regular feedback from staff;
- Opportunities are taken to focus on the cultural knowledge explicit or implicit in texts;

Discussion is provided before and during reading and writing activities, using preferred language where appropriate;
- Where possible, learning progression moves from concrete to abstract;
- Pupils are encouraged to use their home languages to support their learning and understanding of English.

Appendix 2 – EAL Levels

Why assess English as an additional language?

The on-going and continuous assessment of a pupil's proficiency in English as an additional language needs to be done through specific EAL levels for a number of reasons:

- other English levels measure the attainment of learners in English as a subject and not the level of language proficiency in English as an additional language across the curriculum;
- A teacher needs to know what level of proficiency in the use of English a pupil has, to effectively assess, plan and monitor the pupil's language progress in the curriculum.

The EAL levels are used for continuous assessment of a bilingual learner's English language development.

They are used to:

- Track the progress of pupils from different language backgrounds;
- Inform and monitor the impact of interventions designed to address the needs of bilingual pupils;
- Plan, set targets and decide on the appropriate support needed to meet the language development needs of the EAL pupils.

The levels are as follows:

Band A – New to English
Pupils are new to English and can only use minimal or no English beyond a few words or phrases.

Band B – Early Acquisition
 Pupils begin to understand and use simple English in familiar contexts but need substantial support.

Band C – Developing Competence
Pupils take part in everyday communication and some learning, though they still require support for academic language.

Band D – Competent
Pupils use English effectively for learning across the curriculum, with occasional need for support in complex language.

Band E – Fluent
Pupils use English confidently and accurately in both social and academic contexts, with little to no support required.

Appendix 3 – Triggers for Concern

- Language acquisition progress below expected norm;
- Unusually slow work rate compared with peers;
- Little response to peer or teacher intervention;
- Specific weakness in English language development, e.g. poor verbal comprehension, limited vocabulary and use of expression;
- Poor listening and attention skills;
- Specific weakness in English literacy skills, e.g. difficulties in reading, comprehension or limited unaided writing;
- Very low baseline assessment;
- Poor ability in first language;
- Inability to acquire basic number concepts;
- Parent expressing concern over pupil's school progress;
- Pupil has difficulty in subjects which are less language dependent. However, it should be recognised that knowledge of vocabulary is necessary in all subjects;
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties.