

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy



At Bridgewater our policies are regularly reviewed. This reflects current practice within school and all related government guidance and statutory requirements.

1 Introduction

The Government defines EAL Learners as:

'A first language, where it is other than English, is recorded where a child was exposed to the language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in home or in the community.' (*DfE School Census Guide 2016-2017, 2016 p.63*)

In our school the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children are important. We encourage all our children to achieve the highest possible standards. We do this through taking account of each child's life experiences and needs.

At Bridgewater, 51.91% of children have English as an additional language (March 2024), with 28 languages being spoken.

Children who are learning English as an additional language have skills and knowledge about language similar to monolingual English-speaking children, research also shows that it can exceed that of monolingual children. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English.

2 Aims and objectives

The National Curriculum secures entitlement for all children to a number of areas of learning and gives them the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfilment and development as responsible citizens. We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school.

The aim of this policy is to help ensure that we meet the full range of needs of those children who are learning English as an additional language. This is in line with the requirements of current legislation.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study. We understand that all pupils need to learn the English language, which will enable them to participate in social and educational activities as well as the language of the curriculum. We are mindful about ensuring that learning is manageable for all children to avoid cognition overload.

We are a 'School of Sanctuary' and we provide a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment. Children learn best when they feel secure and valued. We welcome all new arrivals and talk to parents/carers to find out about previous schooling, languages spoken etc. Interpreters/translations are used where needed.

The EAL coordinator works closely with all staff to share resources and strategies, provide support with assessments and to discuss any specific children's needs where necessary.

3 Teaching and learning style

At Bridgewater, teachers and teaching assistants take action to help children who are learning English as an additional language by various means:

We support children to develop their spoken and written English by:

- Ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meaning of key words, metaphors and idioms;
- Explaining how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes across a range of subjects;
- Providing a range of reading materials that highlight the different ways in which English is used;
- Ensuring that there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing;
- Encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another;
- Building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing uses of English and other languages support one another;
- Using Voice 21 resources and strategies to develop oracy skills.

We ensure access to the curriculum and to assessment by:

- Providing accessible texts and materials that suit children's ages and levels of learning;
- Providing support through ICT, video or audio materials, dictionaries and translators, readers and amanuenses (writers/scribes);
- Using the home or first language where appropriate and available.
- Using appropriate strategies and resources to aid the development of language skills (visual organisers, sentence substitution tables).

4 Curriculum access

All children in our school follow the curricular requirements of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. Children with English as an additional language do not produce separate work. We provide differentiated opportunities matched to individual EAL pupils' needs.

Key features of language, which are necessary for effective participation, are identified. These might be key words, certain patterns of grammar, uses of language and forms of text.

In the Foundation Stage we plan opportunities for children to develop their English, and we provide support to help them take part in activities.

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

- Building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing uses of English and of other languages support one another;
- Providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults;
- Providing dual language resources – reading books etc.
- Providing a variety of writing in the children's home language as well as in English;
- Providing opportunities for children to hear their home languages as well as English whenever possible.
- Using the Launchpad for Literacy framework.

5 Key principles for additional language acquisition

- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- Effective use of language is crucial to the teaching and learning of every subject.
- The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and planned for appropriately.
- Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understandings cannot always be assumed but need to be explored.
- School staff have a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- The focus and use of additional support time are best seen as an integral part of curriculum and lesson planning.
- A distinction is made between EAL and Special Educational Needs.
- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the importance of pupils' home languages and to build on their existing knowledge and skills.
- Many concepts and skills depend on and benefit from well-developed home language and literacy in home language enhances subsequent acquisition of EAL.
- All languages, dialects, accents and cultures are equally valued.

6 Assessment

Teachers and teaching assistants carry out initial assessments of new EAL admits using the Bell EAL Assessment Framework for Schools within their first two weeks at Bridgewater. This framework allows teachers to set targets and track progress, being mindful that children will not 'jump' from one band to the next and it is not a year by year thing. Data shows that *'it takes 6-8 years to become fully fluent in English and to catch up with their peers who only speak English'* and that schools therefore *'need a long-term view and a long-term set of expectations about learning and support of EAL pupils.'*

We carry out ongoing recording of attainment and progress in line with agreed school procedures.

The statutory assessment arrangements of the National Curriculum allow us to make special arrangements for children who are learning English as an additional language.

In the mathematics tasks and tests at Key Stage 1, we translate words or phrases that appear in the assessment materials or that the children use in their responses.

For the science and written mathematics test at Key Stage 2, we provide oral or written translations of words or phrases in the test papers which we think are likely to prove difficult for children for whom English is an additional language.

For the mental arithmetic test at Key Stage 2, we provide an oral translation of the test to children who have limited English.

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S.Robson

J.Stoker