

2026

EAL & BEM Policy



**Woolgrove School,
Special Needs Academy**

Live, Laugh and Learn
Together

Owner: Headteacher
Authored by: Deputy Head
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English as an Additional Language (EAL)

This policy is a statement of our school's aims and strategies to ensure that EAL pupils fulfil their potential.

Introduction

All pupils need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn. For pupils who are learning English as an additional language, this includes recognising and valuing their home language and background. As a school, we are aware that bilingualism is a strength and that EAL pupils have a valuable contribution to make. We take a whole school approach, including ethos, curriculum, and education against racism and promoting language awareness.

Aims of Policy

This policy aims to raise awareness of the school's obligations and to support the planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, and the use of resources and strategies to meet the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) and so to raise pupil achievement.

This policy is specific to EAL but operates in conjunction with other school policies and guidelines, which will also indicate provision for EAL pupils.

Context of school

The following information is gathered about pupils:

- linguistic background and competence in other language/s
- previous educational experience
- family and biographical background

A member of staff is nominated to have responsibility for BEM and EAL. Currently this is Vicky Litchfield.

Key Principles of additional language acquisition

- EAL pupils are entitled to the full National Curriculum programmes of study and all their teachers have a responsibility for teaching English as well as other subject content.
- Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understanding cannot be assumed but must be made explicit.
- Language is central to our identity. Therefore, the home languages of all pupils and staff should be recognised and valued. Pupils should be encouraged to maintain their home language and use it in the school environment wherever possible.
- Although many pupils acquire the ability to communicate on a day-to-day basis in English quite quickly, the level of language needed for academic study is much deeper and more detailed, and can require continuing support for up to ten years.
- Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and included in planning.
- Teaching and support staff play a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- Knowledge and skills developed in learning the first language aid the acquisition of additional languages.
- A clear distinction should be made between EAL and Special Educational Needs.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital should recognise and reflect on one of the core principles of the EYFS, the **Unique Child**: 'every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-

assured' (EYFS, 2017). All staff will consider the cultures, languages and traditions that children and their families bring, and how these might be valued and celebrated.

All children at Woolgrove School will have their own knowledge and experiences that will link to the culture and wider family. These might include languages, beliefs, traditions, cultural and family heritage, interests, travel and work. All staff will value the children's and families' cultures and aim to find out about these to ensure that these benefit learning and progress.

Staff will do this by:

- Building warm and positive relationships with families and inviting parents to share what is important to them and their child and the dreams and aspirations.
- Observing and joining in with Play and Learn to understand children's interests and difficulties.
- Listen to families to find out what their children enjoy, like and don't like and any worries that have. Avoid assumptions about different cultural backgrounds, customs and experiences.
- Plan and deliver stimulating Child Initiated Learning and Adult Directed activities that take into account and value children's cultural experiences such as cooking, music, dance and key words activities.
- Share with parents where possible key words in the child's first language.
- Learn some key words or phrases in the child's first language.
- Incorporate a variety of materials and artefacts in the classroom that represent the different cultures and languages, such as dual-language books, signs and labels using home-languages or scripts, play materials or soft furnishings.

Building children's character

All children at Woolgrove will be encouraged and supported to develop as a "unique child." Children will be encouraged to value the cultures of others and develop their character. This will include tolerance, acceptance and resilience. They also will be supported and taught to develop characteristics of effective learning, such as thinking, enjoyment, motivation

Home / School Links

The importance of home/school links cannot be underestimated. Parents need to be helped to find out about the education system and encouraged to work with the school to support their children. Booklets about how parents can help their child with reading are available at www.thegrid.org.uk in Bengali, Polish and Urdu.

Families must be supported to feel confident in approaching school. Interpreters may be necessary to achieve:

- Completion of Initial Entry Form with parents;
- Translation (if necessary) of school reports on pupil progress; and
- Attendance of parents/carers at teacher/parent meetings and EHCP annual review meetings.

Data Collection

- When a new EAL child arrives the Class Teacher will assess the pupil's competence levels in English and pass these onto the EAL Leader, along with information about the child's home language.
- The School Assessment Leader and EAL leader will analyse and monitor progress and attainment of EAL pupils in comparison with the school as a whole.

Assessment

- All EAL pupils are entitled to assessments as required.

- Staff have regular liaison time to discuss pupil progress, needs and targets.
- Progress in the acquisition of English is regularly assessed and monitored. This may be achieved by using the Hertfordshire Guidelines for Assessment of Competence in English as an Additional Language for Development of Bilingual Pupils or the Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework for Schools (Version 2.0) and new digital EAL Assessment Tracker <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/bme/eal/assessment.shtml>
- Assessment methods are checked for cultural bias and action is taken to remove any that is identified.
- Consideration and sensitivity are given to the appropriateness of testing EAL pupils at the earlier stages of English acquisition.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Targets for EAL pupils are appropriate, challenging and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Planning for EAL pupils incorporates both curriculum and EAL specific objectives.
- Staff regularly observe, assess and record information about pupils' developing use of language.
- When planning the curriculum, staff take account of the linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds of families.

Teaching Strategies

- Classroom activities have clear learning objectives and use appropriate materials and support to enable pupils to participate in lessons.
- Key language features of each curriculum area, e.g. key vocabulary, uses of language, forms of text, are identified.
- Enhanced opportunities are provided for speaking and listening, including both process and presentational talk, and use made of drama techniques and role play. Pupils have access to effective staff and peer models of spoken language.
- Additional visual support is provided, e.g. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, demonstration and use of gesture.
- Additional verbal support is provided, e.g. repetition, modelling, peer support.
- Use is made of collaborative activities that involve purposeful talk and encourage and support active participation.
- Where possible, learning progression moves from the concrete to the abstract.
- Discussion is provided before, during and after reading and writing activities.
- Scaffolding is provided for language and learning, e.g. talk frames, writing frames.

The Role of the BEM Leader

- The BEM Leader will liaise with BEM advisory teachers.
- The BEM Leader will support staff in the teaching of EAL pupils.
- The BEM Leader is responsible for ensuring that EAL data collection procedures are carried out.
- The BEM Leader will monitor EAL and BEM provision in the school.

Resources

The curriculum will reflect and draw on pupils' linguistic and cultural/religious knowledge and experiences. To present positive images of those experiences resources will include:

- Dual Language books in classrooms and libraries
- Multi-lingual signs and posters around the school and classrooms.
- Displays of languages.
- Language videos/CDs of stories, poems, songs.
- Dual language I.T. programmes.

- Language and vocabulary games.

Success Criteria for this Policy:

- Pupils feel confident and happy.
- Pupils (other than those recently arrived) achieve on a level with the monolingual pupils.
- Staff feel confident in supporting the needs of BEM/EAL pupils.
- Pupil data is accessible and manageable.
- Parents/carers are happy to approach the school.
- The school environment reflects and celebrates the multi-lingual nature of the pupil population.

Monitoring this Policy

- All staff are responsible for implementing this policy.
- The BEM Leader and Assessment Leader will collect and analyse EAL data.

Additional advice can be sought from The Wellbeing Team

Hertfordshire Development Centre

Robertson House

Stevenage

Hertfordshire SG1 2FQ

Toks Olusamokun

Race Equality Advisor

Tel: 01438 844858

Email: toks.olusamokun@hfteducation.org

Interpreting requests can be made by telephoning 01438 844100,
EMAIL: csf_interpreting@hertscc.gov.uk or by completing the online form at
<http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/solero/>

Guidelines on supporting pupils with English as an Additional Language are available at

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/bme/equality/index.shtml>

Additional resources are included in the appendices.

Publications: Bilingual Pupils with Special Educational Needs - Assessment and Intervention

- Raz Alpren and Judith McCall.

SUPPORTING NEW ARRIVALS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- Teach your class to say “hello” using the new pupil’s language and learn to say his/her name correctly.
- Don’t panic - children may have a silent period.
- Plan for peer support – put in place a buddy system.
- Arrange for a tour of the school, naming objects and places.
- Meet parents to get background information – using an interpreter if necessary.
- Make all communication as visual as possible including at KS2.
- Have a box of materials and activities that beginners can access easily.
- Provide a bilingual dictionary for pupils who are literate in their first language.
- Keep activities short – don’t expect beginners to be able to sit and listen for too long.
- Create the opportunity for the beginner to succeed in at least one activity each day e.g. giving out books.
- Group beginners with pupils with good language and behaviour models.
- Understand the pressures and changes that the beginner is experiencing.
- Enable beginners to maintain their first language in school and at home.
- Use simple sentences or phrases to model correct language structures.
- Model language rather than correct the beginner’s language.
- Allow thinking time.
- Enhance classroom resources (and displays) to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of new arrivals.
- Find information about First language (readily available on internet) to better understand pupils’ acquisition of English.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse responses orally.
- Demonstrate the meaning of instructions.

Supporting newly arrived learners of EAL

A checklist for admission to your school

Preparing for an interview **Whom to invite.**

- ☐ The child and his/her parents or carers
- ☐ The Head Teacher, class teacher and EAL Leader
- ☐ An interpreter if needed
- ☐ The designated 'buddies' to greet the child after the interview

What information does the family and the child need?

- ☐ The names of members of staff the child will meet in school. A copy of any 'names and faces' board in the school entrance would be very useful.
- ☐ Requirements for school's admissions forms
- ☐ A welcome pack, including details of daily routines and timetabled activities, school policies, information about homework or reading books to be taken home etc
- ☐ A calendar of school events, trips, holidays and occasional days
- ☐ Uniform and PE kit list with examples to show.
- ☐ A list of any other clothing or equipment which the family is expected to provide.
- ☐ Information about school meals and lunch time arrangements.
- ☐ Information about any support the school will put in place e.g. TA, buddies
- ☐ Information about any grants, benefits or assistance available
- ☐ Curriculum information
- ☐ General information about schools in England and Wales e.g. a copy of 'The Learning Journey' in relevant language and about teaching methodologies e.g. play and active learning, group work, purposeful talk.
- ☐ A contact name and telephone number for the school

What information does the school need?

- ☐ The child's name and how to spell and pronounce it correctly
- ☐ Details to complete the admissions form during the interview
- ☐ Languages spoken within the family
- ☐ Language used for previous education
- ☐ Languages learned at previous school

- ☐ Educational history, including age starting formal education and any significant gaps in education
- ☐ Level of English acquisition (if possible to determine at this stage)
- ☐ Religion and any particular observances which the school may need to know about e.g. fasting during Ramadan, festivals
- ☐ Participation in any faith or community classes.
- ☐ Dietary requirements
- ☐ Communication with parents e.g. will an interpreter be needed? Will letters need to be translated?
- ☐ Find out about any particular interests or talents the child might have, likes and dislikes.

Supporting the emotional and social needs of the newly arrived pupil

- ☐ Utilise **peer support**. Recruit a pair of 'buddies' and a 'circle of friends' who will help the newly arrived pupil to become familiar with the layout of the school and routines. They will help the child to feel included at lunch time as well as in class activities.
- ☐ Teach the class to say 'hello' using the new pupil's language and learn to **say his/her name correctly**.
- ☐ Introduce basic '**survival language**' (**toilet, hungry, thirsty etc**). A few illustrated cards can be useful.
- ☐ Ensure all staff (teaching and support staff, MSAs, kitchen and caretaking staff) **know about the needs of the new pupil**.
- ☐ Understand that the pupil may have a **silent period** of up to several months. They may seem unresponsive but a great deal of absorption of language and learning will be going on.
- ☐ Understand the **pressures** and changes that the beginner is experiencing e.g. **culture shock**.
- ☐ **Integrate the pupil into regular school and class activities**. Give some responsibilities e.g. giving out books.
- ☐ Participation can take many forms. Don't worry if a pupil does not want to join in actively at first. **Invite the pupil to join in practical activities** and try to ensure they have something to do which is relevant to the lesson.
- ☐ **Behaviours can be culturally influenced**. Some pupils may avoid eye contact, smile even when they are in disagreement, when they are being reprimanded or don't understand what you are saying. They may stand closer or further away than you or other children are accustomed to.
- ☐ Recognise that there may be **differences in attitudes to food, in eating styles and preferences**. The child might not be used to eating with anyone outside their family.
- ☐ **Be sensitive about inappropriate behaviour** e.g. aggression may be caused by tensions from the new situation or by previous experiences. Pent-up emotions and frustrations may be released in the playground.
- ☐ It is very tiring to learn a new language and to learn in an unfamiliar language. The process of settling into a new school routine can also be stressful. Pupils will need **regular short breaks** from concentration throughout the day.
- ☐ Show interest in the pupil's country of origin. **Give their culture recognition** in any way you can.
- ☐ **Value, use and display first language** wherever possible.
- ☐ Encourage **interaction with speakers of the same language** in the school and at home (a secure first language reflects in any additional language learned).
- ☐ Recognise that **the beginner may have a greater ability or understanding** than he/she is able to demonstrate, which can be frustrating for pupil and teacher.
- ☐ **Maintain contact with the parents**. Invite them into school. It might be helpful to them and to the school to discuss their experiences of education and their expectations of education in England.
- ☐ Ask parents and members of the community to **provide first language resources** e.g. labels, pictures, recordings of music or stories. Invite them into school to join in assemblies or to read dual language books. Some resources are also available from MECSS and the Schools' Library Service.
- ☐ It is important to avoid overgeneralisations and stereotyping of pupils and their families. **Whilst cultural diversity and individual uniqueness are valued, it is also important to emphasise our similarities** and things we hold in common. Nearly all newly arrived pupils want to learn, want to make friends and want to feel that they belong. They want to do well and look to staff for support and help.

Teaching and learning strategies

- ☐ Provide as much visual support as possible: objects, labelled pictures, picture dictionaries, DVDs, ICT etc.
- ☐ Plan small group activities where talk and interaction are central to the learning going on. The newly arrived pupil may take a passive role to begin with but he/she will be hearing patterns of English and learning while listening.
- ☐ Don't worry if at first the child joins in an activity that you think he/she does not understand. As a newly arrived pupil, it is more important that the child is included and feels part of what is going on.
- ☐ Provide opportunities for oral rehearsal and repetition.
- ☐ Provide key words and phrases at the beginning of a new topic and pre-teach if possible. (Preview)
- ☐ Allow the pupil time to summarise and reflect on what he/she has learned. (Review)
- ☐ Give the child opportunities to practise what they have learned e.g. by explaining to an adult or another child, playing a related game, taking work home to share with their family.
- ☐ Highlight key words and phrases in a text.
- ☐ Encourage active listening, providing vocabulary to listen for and underlining key words in a text while the child listens.
- ☐ Use interactive software e.g. Clicker and Oxford Reading Tree.
- ☐ Carry on sending the beginner bilingual and English speaking child on walks round the school and playground. They can write down the names of things they see in both languages. It doesn't matter if words are repeated.
- ☐ Make books using magazine pictures, clipart or Google picture gallery, or use a digital camera to photograph things in school. The pupils could make books about themselves, the class, a week in school, a topic etc. Images could be labelled with single words and then extended to simple phrases and sentences. Such books can also be shared with parents.
- ☐ Give the child a way of responding alongside others e.g. by pointing, matching, repeating, labelling etc
- ☐ Differentiate tasks so that the child is able to succeed e.g. annotate drawings, sequence pictures, match sentence halves, fill in tables and grids, give yes/no or true/false responses.
- ☐ Use games which reinforce learning through memory and planned speaking and listening e.g. Kim's game, simple board games, barrier games, find my partner etc.
- ☐ Use CDs or MP3s for listening activities and to accompany books and texts with spoken language.
- ☐ Use scaffolding and modelling techniques e.g. talk prompts, sentence starters, writing frames.
- ☐ Use key visuals and graphic organisers (graphs, grids, time lines, tree diagrams etc) to present curriculum content with reduced language input.
- ☐ Parents may be able to support homework tasks e.g. learning vocabulary, matching texts to pictures, supporting reading and sharing dual language texts.

Creating the conditions for learning

- ☐ Enhance classroom resources and displays to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of new arrivals.
- ☐ Find out about the new arrival's first language and previous education to aid understanding of their acquisition of English and their past experiences of teaching and learning styles.
- ☐ Cultural differences can affect a newly arrived pupil's learning. They may not understand your gestures, body language and facial signals, some of which may be part of your repertoire for class management.
- ☐ The pupil may nod when you ask questions but without understanding. It may be a sign of acknowledgement and respect.
- ☐ Be aware that the pupil is not only learning a new language and curriculum content but new behaviours as well.
- ☐ Do not ignore any racist comments or jokes. These should be dealt with and reported using the school's policy for handling racist incidents.
- ☐ Remember that newly arrived pupils may have a silent phase. Give them time to listen. Observe and absorb without any pressure to speak.
- ☐ Give opportunities for non-verbal responses which can show understanding.
- ☐ Make all communication as visual as possible including at KS2
- ☐ Keep activities short – don't expect beginners to be able to sit and listen for too long.
- ☐ Give regular short breaks to aid concentration.
- ☐ Concentrate on what the pupil can do.
- ☐ Use labels and signs in the pupil's first language.
- ☐ Provide a bilingual picture dictionary for pupils who are literate in their first language.
- ☐ Give positive feedback to support initial enthusiasm.
- ☐ Allow thinking time. A beginner bilingual will need more time to process answers.
- ☐ Group beginners with good language and behaviour models.
- ☐ Find out more about the country, culture and language of the new pupil (and others, too). A display of pictures, information and artefacts for all to see can enhance the new pupil's status in the class and can lead to natural discussion of similarities and differences. The family might be pleased to contribute to any display.
- ☐ Focused adult support in group contexts will ensure that the pupil is not isolated and has opportunities to interact with peers in a more structured way.
- ☐ Make sure the child sits in a position to see and hear clearly and next to a good role model.
- ☐ Use collaborative learning techniques so that the newly arrived pupil can be a part of learning activities. This will foster a feeling of belonging which is more important than understanding at the very early stages and will promote learning.

Other online resources to support teachers with new arrivals in their class

[The Bell Foundation: EAL Nexus](#)

EAL Nexus website provides helpful advice and EAL resources for the classroom, whether you are a:

- teacher - are you teaching learners who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and looking for ideas for the classroom?
- school leader – are you looking to improve and develop your policy and practice with EAL learners?
- EAL specialists – do you need relevant and current research which looks across the areas of policy, pedagogy and pupil perceptions, different models of EAL provision and teacher training?

[Mantra Lingua: Dual-language resources for bilingual children and parents](#)

EAL, MFL resources, bilingual children's books and language books

[NALDIC: The national subject association for EAL](#)

A comprehensive site for all professional development, with links to resources and other sites.

[Bell Foundation](#)

[The Bell Foundation: School policies](#)

[The Bell Foundation: Teaching EAL learners in maths](#)

[The Bell Foundation: Teaching EAL learners in science](#)

[Research report by Professor Steve Strand and Dr Ariel Lindorff](#)

[University of Oxford: Proficiency in English, educational achievement and rate of progression in English language learning](#)

EAL and the new Ofsted framework – webinar

Published on Sep 20, 2019

This webinar was hosted by Mark Sims, HMI national lead for English as an Additional Language. The webinar featured a review of the revised Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and handbook from Ofsted, which came into effect in September 2019. The review looked specifically at where there are implications within the new framework for inspectors and schools concerning pupils who use English as an Additional Language (EAL).