



Education is that which liberates

B35 EAL Policy

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B35 Policy on English as an Additional Language

Introduction

The EAL - The Department of Education definition is “A pupil’s first language is defined as any language other than English that a child was exposed to during early development and continues to be exposed to in the home or community. If a child was exposed to more than one language during early development, a language other than English should be recorded, irrespective of the child’s proficiency in English.”

The EAL Ofsted definition is English as an additional language (EAL) refers to” learners whose first language is not English.” This includes: Pupils arriving from other countries and whose first language is not English. Pupils who have lived in the UK for a long time and may appear to be fluent, but speak another language at home- not entirely fluent in terms of their literacy levels. Pupils who have been born in the UK but for whom the home language is not English. Pupils who have a parent who speaks a language other than English and the child communicates in that language (bilingual children).

Aims

- The aim of our policy is to meet the needs, targets and aspirations of every EAL student.
- Making the pupil feel secure, safe and valued in the new environment
- Welcome, celebrate and value our pupil’s life experience, knowledge and culture.
- Value diversity while understanding the social, cultural and language needs of each pupil.
- Create a positive environment where students love to learn, grow and understand.
- Increase fluency and proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Monitor progress with data/tracking for classroom management, curriculum and planning.

Assessment

- School Registration forms will initially identify EAL pupils.
- Entry test first given by school on application as a pre-assessment.
- Instant referral to the Senco/SEN Teacher to assess needs and modifications.
- Continued observation by staff of attainment and progress in line with school procedures.
- Senco/SEN Teacher will monitor assessments and tracking when or if necessary.

Support

- The school will provide texts and resources that suit the pupils’ ages and levels of learning.
- Where appropriate, EAL pupils will be supported by a weekly group, one to one or in class support.
- Where necessary, for older children withdrawal support will take place for a set period of time to address specific language or learning focus.

The Early Years (Foundation Stage) philosophy

The Foundation Stage aims to provide access for all children to a broad and balanced learning environment. Our philosophy is that all children ‘with or without English as an additional language’ should have the opportunity to develop to their full potential, using English as the learning language in the educational environment, as per the EYFS, whilst maintaining and developing the use of their first language, mainly Gujarati. We aim to work within the guidelines for EAL set out by Brent LEA in so far as they relate to pre-school settings.

Bilingualism is an asset, and the first language supports the development of additional languages. Though English is the educational language of our whole school, it is important to facilitate the continued development of the first language. The first language has an important role in cognitive and academic development and supports the acquisition of English, particularly in the early years. It is easier to transfer a concept, skills and understandings learned in the first language than it is to learn them in an additional language.

Background of the Foundation Stage

Many young children enter our school speaking a first language, mainly Gujarati. English is for many an additional language, making them bilingual. ‘In England, the term (bilingual) is currently used to refer to pupils who live in two languages, who have access, or need to use, two or more languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they have fluency in both languages or they are competent and literate in both languages’ (Deryn Hall, Assessment of the needs of bilingual pupils, 1995). A minority of children in our school have a different first language, eg. Tamil, Kannada, Hindi

Some children are ‘advanced bilingual learners’. These children are those learners who have had considerable exposure to an environment within which English is the first language and thus are no longer in the early stages of English language acquisition (Ofsted). A few children also have English as their first language.

The maintenance and development of the main first language Gujarati The children have timetabled Gujarati lessons by a subject specialist from the Kindergarten class onwards. Performing Arts lessons also support the learning of Gujarati. Bilingualism is also encouraged in the Early years through the inclusion of Gujarati songs as well as stories in the creative activities.

In other settings, many children get embarrassed if they are asked to speak in their first language. In the Swaminarayan School, young children are happy to use first language in the classroom; older pupils may use it in the playground but not in the classroom.

Principles and Practice

Admissions

From entry to Year One class upwards, admission tests are based on the curriculum guidance in English for the respective age group. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is carried out, as far as possible, by a staff member who is bilingual in the child’s first language as this enhances the quality of the information gained about previous experiences and future needs. At the interview, parents are requested for this information and the school also explains how our young pupils are helped to learn English.

The acquisition of English in the Early Years

The Foundation Stage staff team have multilingual skills, including Gujarati. This enables the staff to settle the children very quickly as well as to support the children in developing an understanding of the class routine and initial learning.

Subject teachers from Early Years to Senior School

The staff incorporate a range of key factors to activate prior knowledge and focus pupils on the context or topic:

- Boosting the pupil's self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-awareness. Encouraging and praising all attempts at speech without putting too much pressure on the pupil to speak before they are confident to do so.
- Having high expectations; gradually progressing the pupil from one word answers. Provide opportunities for the pupil to participate, interact and achieve excellence.
- Assessing the work of children learning EAL in relation to the national curriculum standards and expectations as early as possible in their school career.
- Recognising the pupil's first language and making it clear that speaking in their first language can be a positive part of the learning process. Sharing cultural diversity and drawing on pupil's knowledge/experience in the teaching process.
- Preparing the classroom and displays such that they reflect an 'inclusive' approach through the use of multicultural/multilingual resources and supplementary materials.
- Ensuring that staff repeat/paraphrase key words or ideas, making clear the meaning in context and moderate the speed of the spoken delivery. Giving the pupil opportunity and time to respond to questions- starting with simple closed questions after they have heard another pupil 'model' a similar answer.
- Giving newly arrived children time by allowing them a 'silent period', which passes once their self-confidence increases. Continue talking to students, reacting to their non-verbal responses/ including them in class/group activities if ingoing the 'silent period.'
- Using teaching strategies that do not allow any racist comments or jokes. Using real life/concrete contexts rather than abstract ones. Introducing key concepts/vocabulary visually (such as role play, pictures, diagrams). Preferential seating where staff can be seen. Use of non-verbal communication, picture cards (PECS), mime and gesture.
- Having a buddy system where the student is placed with a sympathetic pupil who ideally shares the first language. The beginner may initially rely on the use the first language to contribute to lessons. Involving other staff who is bilingual in the pupil's language in the class with them in the lesson if possible.
- Teaching useful phrases (Survival English) to help the pupil function socially.
- Where possible introducing new vocabulary for new subjects early (can be a booster group or sent as homework). Allowing the student to gain access to the new vocabulary and learn it.

Monitor

Policy/procedure will be monitored by Senco/SEN Teacher and the Leadership Team.