



Leamington Federation

Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Introduction

At Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath Primary School, we are committed to high expectations, belonging and full participation for every pupil. Pupils who use English as an Additional Language (EAL) are a diverse group: some are newly arrived in England, while others are fluent multilingual learners. We recognise multilingualism as an asset and seek to remove language-related barriers so that pupils can access an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum and achieve well.

A pupil is recorded as using EAL where a language other than English is known or believed to have been part of their early development and they have been exposed to that language during early childhood. EAL describes a language background; it is not, in itself, a measure of English proficiency, attainment or special educational need. Pupils who use EAL may have knowledge and understanding that exceeds what they can currently express in English, particularly when they are new to learning through English.



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

This policy reflects the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. At Sydenham and Lighthorne Heath Primary Schools, children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted. We value pupils' languages, cultures and identities and seek to ensure that every pupil can participate fully in school life.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that pupils who use EAL are welcomed, accurately assessed, appropriately supported and fully included. We maintain high expectations while making timely adaptations to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing. Practice is informed by current legislation, statutory guidance, the September 2026 Ofsted School Inspection Toolkit and evidence-informed EAL guidance, including resources from The Bell Foundation.

Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy should be read alongside the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty; the Education Act 1996 and the National Curriculum inclusion principles; the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; and the schools' Safeguarding, Inclusion and SEND, Equality, Admissions, Curriculum and Assessment policies.

The Equality Act 2010 protects pupils from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on protected-characteristic grounds. Language background is not itself a protected characteristic, but pupils who use EAL may also share protected characteristics such as race, religion or belief, disability or sex. The schools will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil is disabled and will have due regard to equality of opportunity and good relations.

The SEND Code of Practice makes clear that difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are not SEND. Where progress is slower than expected, staff consider English proficiency, prior education, attendance, health, wellbeing and other contextual factors, while remaining alert to the possibility that a pupil may have both EAL and SEND. Assessment and provision therefore distinguish language-acquisition needs from additional or special educational needs.

In line with the September 2026 Ofsted School Inspection Toolkit, leaders and staff seek to identify pupils' emerging and changing needs accurately, understand barriers to learning and wellbeing, make timely and appropriate adaptations, maintain high expectations and evaluate whether support is making a sustained difference.

Key Principles for Pupils who Use EAL

Pupils who use EAL are entitled to the full National Curriculum and to ambitious teaching. All teachers are teachers of language as well as subject content.

Multilingualism is an asset. Pupils should be encouraged, where helpful, to use their full linguistic repertoire, including home languages, to support thinking, learning, identity and communication.

Curriculum planning should make the language demands of learning explicit. Teachers should identify and teach key vocabulary, sentence structures and disciplinary language alongside subject knowledge.

Teaching should be adapted, not simplified. Cognitive challenge should remain high while linguistic barriers are reduced through modelling, visuals, concrete resources, talk, repetition, pre-teaching, scaffolds and structured opportunities to rehearse language.

Social fluency in English can develop more quickly than the academic language needed for curriculum success. Pupils may therefore require continuing language support after they appear conversationally fluent.

- Assessment should build a holistic picture of the learner, including English proficiency across listening, speaking, reading/viewing and writing, prior education, literacy and oracy in home language(s), curriculum knowledge and individual circumstances.
- EAL is not SEND. Staff must avoid both over-identification and under-identification of SEND and should work closely with the SENDCo where concerns persist across contexts or languages.
- Families are partners in learning. Translation and interpretation should be used where needed so that parents and carers can understand school systems, contribute information and participate meaningfully in decisions.
- All staff model clear, respectful and inclusive language and create opportunities for purposeful pupil talk across the curriculum.

Staff Training, Leadership and Review

The EAL lead, SENDCo and senior leaders support staff to develop expertise in multilingual pedagogy, language-aware teaching and accurate assessment. Professional development may draw on Warwickshire EMTAS, The Bell Foundation, The National College and other nationally recognised organisations and specialist services.

Leaders monitor the participation, attainment, progress, attendance and wellbeing of pupils who use EAL, including those who are also disadvantaged, have SEND or face other barriers. Monitoring considers whether adaptations are timely, proportionate and effective and whether pupils remain fully included in classroom and wider school life.

Governors provide strategic oversight of equality, inclusion and EAL provision. This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier where legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes.

What We Do	Why We Do It	How We Do It	Expected Impact/Outcomes
Induction for newly arrived multilingual learners	• To welcome the pupil and family and establish a sense of belonging. To build a holistic picture of language background, prior education, strengths, interests, health and pastoral needs. To identify any immediate communication, safeguarding, attendance or access needs. To establish effective two-way communication with home.	• Early meeting with parents/carers, using a professional interpreter or approved translation support where required. Collect information about languages used at home, literacy in home language(s), previous schooling, interrupted education and previous English learning. Tour the school, introduce key adults and routines, and provide a buddy/peer support where appropriate. Share essential information with the class teacher promptly and plan initial adaptations. Allow an appropriate settling-in period before formal language assessment where possible; recognise that some new learners may initially listen more than they speak. Use translated or visual information to explain the English education system and how families can support learning.	• The pupil feels safe, welcomed and included. Staff understand the pupil's starting points and avoid assumptions based solely on spoken English. Parents/carers understand school routines and know how to communicate with school. Appropriate language, pastoral and curriculum support is in place quickly.

Inclusive teaching and curriculum access for pupils who use EAL	To ensure full access to an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. To maintain cognitive challenge while reducing language-related barriers. To develop English proficiency alongside curriculum knowledge and disciplinary literacy.	Plan both curriculum and language objectives, explicitly teaching key vocabulary and sentence structures. Use visuals, objects, diagrams, demonstrations, worked examples, visualisers, gestures and graphic organisers. Pre-teach and revisit vocabulary; provide word banks, sentence stems, talk frames and writing frames where useful. Provide structured talk through talk partners, collaborative tasks, oral rehearsal and purposeful questioning. Seat pupils strategically with supportive peers who provide strong models of language without creating dependency. Use pupils' home languages as a learning resource where appropriate, including bilingual dictionaries, dual-language texts, translation and opportunities to discuss concepts first in a stronger language. Chunk instructions, check understanding, allow processing time and avoid unnecessary idiom or culturally specific language. Use flexible small-group or targeted EAL support where this adds value, while keeping pupils connected to high-quality classroom teaching and peer learning.	Pupils participate meaningfully in lessons and the wider life of the school. Language support enables, rather than limits, curriculum access. Pupils develop increasing independence and confidence as multilingual learners. Teachers can identify whether barriers arise from language acquisition, curriculum knowledge or another need.
Assessment, monitoring and identification of need	To understand pupils' starting points and changing language needs accurately. To evaluate whether adaptations and interventions are making a sustained difference. To distinguish EAL-related language needs from possible SEND or other barriers.	Use initial and ongoing assessment of English proficiency across listening, speaking, reading/viewing and writing. Draw on The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework and its five proficiency levels as an evidence-informed school assessment tool; these are used diagnostically and are not a current statutory School Census requirement. Gather information about home-language literacy/oracy, prior schooling and curriculum knowledge; seek first-language assessment or specialist advice where needed. Use formative assessment, oral sampling, pupil conferencing, work scrutiny and curriculum assessment alongside language assessment.	Assessment leads to appropriate, targeted support. Pupils' progress in English proficiency and curriculum learning is visible over time. SEND is neither assumed because a pupil uses EAL nor overlooked because a pupil is multilingual. Leaders can evaluate the quality and impact of provision.

		Set precise, time-limited language targets where targeted support is provided and review impact regularly. Where progress is not as expected, involve the EAL lead and SENDCo and consider attendance, hearing/vision, prior education, trauma, safeguarding, cognition, communication and other contextual factors before drawing conclusions.	
Belonging, inclusion and partnership with families	Pupils learn best when they feel safe, accepted, represented and valued. Home languages, cultures and identities are strengths and should be respected. Parents/carers should be able to participate meaningfully in school life and decision-making.	Celebrate multilingualism through curriculum content, displays, books, assemblies and opportunities to share languages and cultures. Provide peer/buddy support and use the Young Interpreter Scheme appropriately, while ensuring children are not used to interpret sensitive, safeguarding or confidential information. Use professional interpretation/translation for important meetings and documents where required. Engage EMTAS and other relevant services where specialist support would benefit the pupil or family. Support refugee, asylum-seeking and other newly arrived pupils sensitively without assuming trauma or vulnerability; respond to individual need. Ensure EAL pupils take part in enrichment, clubs, trips, leadership opportunities and the full social life of school.	Pupils develop belonging, confidence and positive multilingual identities. Families feel welcomed, informed and able to contribute. Barriers to participation are identified and reduced. The school community values linguistic and cultural diversity.
Resources and digital support	To support access, independence and language development. To ensure resources are age-appropriate, inclusive and matched to pupils' English proficiency and curriculum needs.	Dual-language and multilingual books, picture dictionaries and bilingual glossaries. Visual timetables, photographs, symbols, flashcards, vocabulary mats, language fans and concrete resources. EAL teaching resources and The Bell Foundation classroom guidance/strategies available to staff. Approved digital translation tools may support routine communication and learning. Sensitive personal, safeguarding or special-category information must not be entered into public translation tools; professional interpretation or approved secure services should be used instead.	Teachers can access practical resources quickly and use them purposefully. Pupils are increasingly able to understand instructions, participate and work independently. Home-school communication is accessible while confidentiality and data protection are maintained.

		Resources should avoid stereotypes and reflect the diversity of pupils' languages, cultures, faiths and experiences.	
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This policy was ratified:	September 2026
And will be reviewed:	September 2027
Signed by the Head teacher:	<i>Juliette Westwood</i>
Chair of Governors:	Richard Butler