

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

This policy is a statement of Open Box Education Centre's aims and strategies to ensure that all EAL students fulfil their true potential.

Introduction

All students need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn effectively and become successful members of society. For students 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 can be a useful learning tool and that all EAL students can make a valuable contribution to their school community. We take a whole school approach, including our ethos, curriculum and education, against racism.

Aims of the EAL Policy

The policy aims to raise awareness and to support planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, and the use of resources and strategies to meet the needs of students who have English as an additional language (EAL), thus raising student achievement and aspirations.

The Government defines EAL learners as:

'A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.' (DfE Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics July 2020)

We commit to prioritise the following:

1. Equality

To be proactive in removing barriers that stand in the way of our EAL students' learning and success.

2. Diversity

To meet our responsibilities to EAL students by ensuring equal access to our curriculum and the achievement of their educational potential.

3. Belonging and Cohesion

To provide our EAL students with a safe, welcoming, nurturing environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate.

Objectives of the EAL Policy

- To assist all EAL students to become fluent English speakers as quickly as possible.
- To assist and support all EAL students in their acquisition of English language skills.
- To develop staff expertise to ensure that all EAL students attain levels of achievement appropriate to their intellectual abilities.
- To ensure rigorous monitoring, evaluating and review systems.

Key Principles of additional language acquisition

- EAL students are entitled to access to our full curriculum 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 language of all students and staff should be recognised and valued. Students should be encouraged to maintain their home language.
- Although many students 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.

1. New to English (Beginners)

A student may:

- Use first language for learning and other purposes.
- Remain silent in the classroom.
- Copy/repeat some words and phrases.
- Understand some everyday English expressions but have minimal or no English literacy.
- Follow day-to-day social communication in English.
- Begin to use spoken English for social purposes.
- Understand simple instructions and follow narrative/accounts with visual support.
- Develop some skills in reading and writing.
- Become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary.

A student at this stage needs significant support.

2. Developing Competence (Intermediate)

A student may:

- Participate in learning activities with increasing independence.
- Express themselves orally in English but structural inaccuracies are still apparent.
- Require ongoing support in literacy, particularly for understanding text and writing.
- Follow abstract concepts and more complex written English.

A student at this stage requires support to access the curriculum fully.

3. Competent (Advanced)

A student may:

- Develop oral English well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum.
- Read and understand a wide variety of texts.
- Written English may lack complexity.
- Demonstrate evidence of errors in grammatical structure.

A student at this stage needs support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.

4. Fluent

A student at this stage can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a student who uses English as his/her first language.

Assessment

- All EAL students are assessed in line with the school's assessment procedures.
- Staff have the opportunity to discuss students' progress and needs together.
- Progress in the acquisition of English is regularly assessed and monitored.
- Assessment methods are checked for cultural bias which may cause results to be inaccurate and action is taken to remove any that is identified.
- Consideration and sensitivity is given to the appropriateness of testing EAL students at the earlier stages of English acquisition.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Targets for EAL students are appropriate, challenging and reviewed regularly.
- Planning for EAL students incorporates both curriculum and EAL specific objectives.

Strategies

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access:

- Collaborative group work
- Opportunities for speaking and listening
- 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/students, texts, key word lists
- Writing frames, directed activities related to texts
- Opportunities for role play
- Regular feedback from staff
- Opportunities to focus on the cultural knowledge explicit or implicit in texts
- Discussion provided before and during reading and writing activities, using preferred language where appropriate
- Learning progression moves from concrete to abstract

EAL with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs and those who are Gifted and/or Talented

We recognise that intelligence is not measured in the ability to speak English fluently. Should Special Educational Needs be identified, EAL students have equal access to the school’s SEND provision. EAL students identified as Gifted and Talented have equal access to the school’s provision.

Communicating with parents and carers for whom English is an additional language

We recognise that there may be barriers to communication for parents and carers in supporting their children’s education. We will make every effort to provide dual language information and bilingual support, where possible, for referral meetings, academic reviews, school events and written communications, and we will make every effort to monitor parental involvement.

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Date of next review
Dec 2020 version 1.0	Elinor Fahy	March 2019
March 2021 version 1.1	Alison Dolan	March 2023
March 2023 version 1.2	Alison Dolan	March 2025

Approved by: (Principal) (date)

Authorised by:..... (Chair of Governors) (date)

To be reviewed every: 2 Years

Next review date: March 2025