



English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

May 2025



English as an Additional Language Policy (EAL)

All children at Rookery School have the right to an outstanding education.

It is our aim to ensure that every child learns to the best of their ability within the broad and balanced curriculum offered, making the most of opportunities to read, experience and communicate in order to achieve.

This policy is a statement of Rookery School's aims and strategies to ensure that all EAL pupils are supported adequately in order to acquire the proficiency in English they need to develop to their full potential. Although in the early stages of English language acquisition, access to our full curriculum may be limited slightly, every unique learning opportunity will be adapted to enable the active participation of each child irrespective of their level of language, our inclusive ethos at the core.

Introduction

All pupils need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn effectively and become successful members of society. For pupils, who are learning English as an additional language, this includes celebrating their home language and background. As a school, we are aware that bilingualism is a useful learning tool and that all EAL pupils can make a valuable contribution to their school community, preparing them for a world beyond our school.

Aims

The policy aims to raise awareness of our vision: philosophy, planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, to meet the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language therefore raising pupil achievement and aspirations.

1. Equality

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

2. Diversity

To meet our responsibilities to EAL pupils by ensuring equal access to the National Curriculum and the achievement of their educational potential.

3. Belonging and Cohesion

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

Objectives

To assist all EAL pupils to become confident communicators: fluent English speakers and self-assured readers and writers as quickly as possible.

To assist and support all EAL pupils in their acquisition of English language skills.

To develop staff expertise to ensure that all EAL pupils attain levels of achievement appropriate to their intellectual abilities.

To develop rigorous monitoring, evaluating and review systems.

For the purpose of this policy, our definition of EAL is the following:

‘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.’

(DfE Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics July 2020)

Key Principles of Additional Language Acquisition

In the book entitled ‘Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners’, Jane D. Hill and Cynthia L. Björk state:

‘Anyone who has been around children who are learning to talk knows that the process happens in stages—first understanding, then one-word utterances, then two-word phrases, and so on. Students learning a second language move through five predictable stages: Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). How quickly students progress through the stages depends on many factors, including level of formal education, family background, and length of time spent in the country.’ This table from the same text, effectively outlines the stages along with characteristics of such learners, approximate time scale and useful teacher prompts at each stage:

Figure 2.1. Sample Teacher Prompts for Each Stage of Second Language Acquisition

Stage	Characteristics	Approximate Time Frame	Teacher Prompts
Preproduction	The student - Has minimal comprehension. - Does not verbalize. - Nods "Yes" and "No." - Draws and points.	0–6 months	- Show me ... - Circle the ... - Where is ... ? - Who has ... ?
Early Production	The student - Has limited comprehension - Produces one- or two-word responses. - Uses key words and familiar phrases. - Uses present-tense verbs.	6 months–1 year	- Yes/no questions - Either/or questions - Who ... ? - What ... ? - How many ... ?
Speech Emergence	The student - Has good comprehension. - Can produce simple sentences. - Makes grammar and pronunciation errors. - Frequently misunderstands jokes.	1–3 years	- Why ... ? - How ... ? - Explain ... - Questions requiring phrase or short-sentence answers
Intermediate Fluency	The student - Has excellent comprehension. - Makes few grammatical errors.	3–5 years	- What would happen if ... ? - Why do you think ... ? - Questions requiring more than a sentence response
Advanced Fluency	The student has a near-native level of speech.	5–7 years	- Decide if ... - Retell ...

It is crucial that teachers are aware of the proficiency level of their EAL learner in order to pitch the work appropriately, moving them onto the next stage of language learning. At Rookery, as recommended, five similar stages which are outlined in the ‘The Levels of Proficiency in English’ (The Bell Foundation) are used as a guide to monitor language acquisition in order to provide the necessary support.

EAL pupils are entitled to the full National Curriculum programme 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 therefore meanings and understanding cannot be assumed, but must be made explicit.

Language is central to our identity. Therefore, the home language of all pupils and staff should be recognised and valued. It is important that parents and pupils are encouraged to maintain their home language since evidence shows that this builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted.

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 however language demands of such learning tasks need to be identified and included in planning.

The Context of Rookery School

Rookery School is located in the heart of Handsworth, a multi-cultural inner- city community, where 59% of our children have English as an Additional Language. Of these children, 42% are 'Disadvantaged pupils'. Presently, there are 43 languages spoken in the family home. Apart from English, most of our children are Punjabi speakers, with a fair proportion communicating in Urdu and Bengali at home. Many of our new arrivals over the past 10 years have been Eastern European, the majority being Romanian or Romany speakers.

On entry to the school, information is gathered about:

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

Levels of Language Proficiency in English (The Bell Foundation)

A. New to English

A child at this stage needs significant support and 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.

B. Early Acquisition

A child at this stage needs a significant amount of support to access the curriculum and may:

- Follow day to day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support.

- Begin to use spoken English for social purposes.
- Understand simple instructions and can follow narrative accounts with visual support.
- Have developed some skills in Reading and Writing.
- Become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary.

C. Developing Competence

A child at this stage requires support to access the curriculum fully and may:

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

D. Competent

A child operates across the curriculum to a level of competence nearing that of a pupil who uses English as their first language. They may still make grammatical errors and need support to develop their linguistic skills and may:

- Develop oral English well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum.
- Read and understand a wide variety of text.
- Written English may lack complexity.
- Demonstrate evidence of errors in grammatical structure.
- Need support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.

E. Fluent

A child at this stage can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as their first language. Generally operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

Assessment

All EAL pupils are assessed within the first two weeks of their arrival to Rookery school, giving them time to settle and feel comfortable in their learning. EAL pupils will be assessed using the Flashacademy Assessment Tool which draws on the five point scale 'Levels of Proficiency in English' providing a final 'best fit' judgement across the four disciplines of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

Sensitivity is given to the appropriateness of testing EAL pupils at the earlier stages of English acquisition therefore assessments take place in small groups across phases with the EAL lead who ensures all children are comfortable and at ease.

Children who are assessed as A, B or C on 'The levels of Proficiency in English' scale are on a register and their abilities monitored through interventions. Teacher assessments, which use diagnostic testing to aid this process for KS1 and KS2 learners, take place three times a year, in line with assessment procedures across the school. The Flashacademy Assessment Tool will support this process, informing teachers' assessments.

Staff have the opportunity to discuss pupils' progress and needs with members of the English team including the EAL lead during Cohort Analysis meetings to ensure good progress is maintained.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning for EAL pupils incorporates both curriculum and language specific objectives. In the early stages, the language learning takes precedence, building the foundation, however exposure to our rich curriculum experiences are encouraged, adapting opportunities where possible.

Staff regularly observe and assess pupils' developing use of language as part of good classroom practice and feed this diagnostic assessment into subsequent planning.

The EAL lead monitors the teacher assessments and Flashacademy assessment data taken three times annually, supporting teachers where possible to aid children who appear to be struggling.

Teaching Strategies and Pedagogical Approaches

For newly arrived children who are in the early stages of language acquisition, 'Racing to English' is used due to its sound pedagogy and thorough, progressive coverage, gradually building the grammar and sentence structures through key vocabulary and common themes, clear language learning objectives at its core.

Principles of 'Racing to English'

- Oracy/Interaction – the activities are designed to encourage interaction and purposeful, focused talk between learners.
- Repetition – many of the activities are game-like so it is easy to ensure that the same activity and therefore the same language items are used many times.
- Comprehensible input – in order to ensure understanding, the activities are based either on photo/picture input or on stories that create a meaningful context for the language items.
- Clear language learning objectives – the activities all have clear language learning objectives and focus on particular functions and sentence structures.

Implications of the principles

1. Racing to English activities challenge teachers to involve their students in talk and interaction which are the basis of all good language work. The silent classroom is not conducive to quality language learning.
2. Students learn more quickly and more effectively from their peers than they do from staff, therefore they will not be withdrawn but wherever possible will engage with 'The Racing to English' activities within groups rather than in a one-to-one situation.

Flashacademy

At Rookery, Flashacademy, a language learning platform, uses a child's home language to accelerate English language acquisition (45 languages are available). Our children can develop their English independently through use of the app which develops Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening skills through an interactive program, which identifies errors and subsequently targets those weaknesses. The integration of visual, audio and written form offers maximum support to the language learner. Teachers use Flashacademy when children are unable to access the curriculum and it is considered of greater value to develop their language skills independently in this way.

Clicker

'Clicker Writer' supports the development of children's reading and writing skills through an app. It allows children to select vocabulary, supports children in building sentences and allows their work to be read back to them, encouraging further reflection. Teachers prepare word banks and learning grids to suit the children's level and curriculum areas being covered.

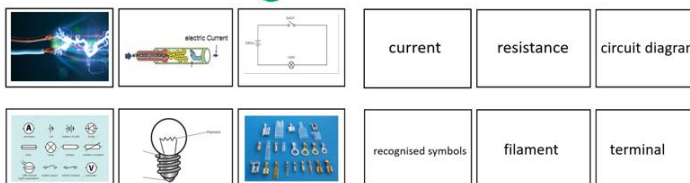
Vocabulary

The explicit teaching of vocabulary is a key focus across the whole school however is of optimum importance to our EAL learners. A range of strategies are used to help children to remember, understand and use vocabulary from across the curriculum. Match cards, which are based on the principles set out by Gordon Ward (EAL specialist and creator of Racing to English), Flashacademy Custom lessons and the 'Rookery Explanation Structures' are used during projects to keep the learning of key vocabulary interactive, repetitive and fun whilst providing sentence structures which allow the children to explain their thinking using the new vocabulary in context, demonstrating progression across school.

Implementation – the acquisition of vocabulary

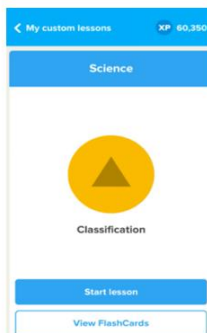
• Remember it

1.



• Understand it

2.



3.

Rookery Explanation Structures

Year group	Language Structures
EYFS	This is..... because..... I thinkbecause.....
1	I think..... because..... I know..... because.....
2	I know.....because..... When Ibecause/ so.....
3	If I knowthen I know.....because/ since/ as..... It is clear that when.....because/ since/ as.....
4	In summary,as a result/ therefore..... Having considered....., I believe...as a result/ therefore.....
5	In conclusion,therefore/ consequently/ resulting in..... The reason I believe this is.....therefore/ consequently/ resulting in.....
6	Evidently..... hence/ resulting in/ causing..... Due to.....it is evident that..... hence/ resulting in/ causing.....

• Use it

For our EAL learners in the Early Years, the EYFS Communication and Language guidance supports the teaching of a wealth of experiences where children interact and explore language, developing their speaking, listening and understanding alongside our children whose first language is English. This immersion in spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development so is a principle focus during these early stages of learning.

Materials

Other than the resources mentioned above, dictionaries, pictorial flash cards, visual key word lists, activities, games, songs, substitution grids, graphic organisers, instructional videos and language stems and writing frames are provided to support our EAL learners. Displays and resources reflect linguistic and cultural diversity.

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access for all EAL pupils:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing
- Additional verbal support-repetition
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc.
- Bilingual resources, e.g. books, dictionaries, bilingual staff/pupils
- Writing frames and sentence stems
- Opportunities for role play
- Regular feedback from staff
- Discussion provided before and during reading and writing activities, using preferred language where appropriate

Language Ambassadors

Language Ambassadors (children who are articulate in their home language and English) from Year 1- Year 6 are selected to support children with the same home language during induction, as they settle into school routines and in class during their learning. Training sessions are provided for newly appointed Ambassadors and half termly meetings are held where they receive training and coaching on how to support others in developing their English with an emphasis also on maintaining home languages. Through this initiative, we aim also to raise the status of home languages, appreciating also the skills of children in maintaining and developing more than one language.

EAL with Disabilities /Special Educational Needs and those who are More Able

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

Parental/Community Involvement

At Rookery School we encourage parental and community involvement by:

- Providing a welcoming induction process for newly arrived pupils and their families/carers.
- Using translators and interpreters, where appropriate and available, to ensure good links are made between the family and the school.
- Utilise Language Ambassadors to support newly arrived parents and children.
- Identify linguistic, cultural and religious background of pupils and establish contact with the wider community.
- Celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of EAL pupils.
- Recognise and encourage the use of first language for developing positive links between school and home.
- Support parents, so they can help their children at home.

Parent workshops are delivered as a short course by the EAL Lead in Year 2 and 6 to equip parents, who are most in need, to support their child with reading at home as effectively as possible, developing basic English as well as encouraging maintenance of home language, a key principle of second language acquisition.