

# Liberty Academy Trust

## English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. A number of our pupils and their families have English as an Additional Language (EAL). This diversity is viewed positively as an opportunity to open up pupils, staff and families to new cultural experiences and break down social barriers. We recognise the additional support needs that may exist for pupils and families with EAL and aim to address these proactively.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the school's aims, objectives and strategies with regard to meeting the needs and celebrating the skills of EAL pupils and helping them to achieve.

## 2. Definition

- 2.1. The Department for Education defines English as an additional language (EAL) 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)

## 3. Our Key Principles

- 3.1. All pupils are entitled to equal access to the curriculum.
- 3.2. Forming and maintaining strong links with parents is part of our Quality-of-Life Framework and is fundamental to our pupils' learning and development.
- 3.3. Learning and using more than one language is an asset and opens up a learning opportunity for our pupils and staff.
- 3.4. Promoting development in a pupil's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages.
- 3.5. Our EAL learners are not a homogenous group, and their individual needs, aspirations and preferences should be understood and planned for.
- 3.6. Other factors may be influencing language development including but not limited to the pupil's diagnosis of Autism and / or anxiety about schooling, which for some could be their first experience. Ongoing review and flexibility in support is important.

## 4. Aims

- 4.1. To give all pupils the opportunity to overcome any barrier to learning.
- 4.2. To welcome and value the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences that pupils with EAL bring to the School whenever possible.
- 4.3. To implement appropriate strategies to ensure that EAL pupils are supported in accessing the full curriculum.

- 4.4. To help EAL pupils to become confident and fluent in speaking and listening, reading and writing in English in order to be able to fulfil their potential.
- 4.5. To encourage children to practice and extend their use of English.
- 4.6. To encourage and enable parental support in improving children's language skills.

## 5. Legislation

- 5.1. Our policy takes into account the National Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and in particular articles 2, 3, 7, 22, 29 and 30. This policy also takes into account the Equality Act 2010 and acknowledges we have a duty not to discriminate against people based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 5.2. Additionally, we aim to meet the full range of needs for those children who are learning English as an additional language, in line with the requirements of the 1976 Race Relations Act.

## 6. Specific Considerations for Specialist Settings

- 6.1. **Distinguishing English language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent part of Autism.** Whether or not they have EAL, all pupils in our schools experience some form of communication difference or difficulty consistent with their diagnosis of autism. Accurate assessment of a pupil's receptive and expressive language skills must take into account EAL status and good practice guidelines.
- 6.2. **Supporting pupils with Autism and EAL to understand the language of the classroom and express their wants, needs, feelings and opinions.** Pupils who are EAL may have English language difficulties that impact on their ability to understand instructions, information or conversation and to express themselves clearly to English speaking adults and peers. This may cause frustration and isolation. Supporting understanding is essential. Many of the methods used to develop communication skills across the whole school will support pupils with EAL. Many examples of effective teaching strategies such as using visuals or dual coding are also helpful. (See LAT Teaching and Learning Policy)
- 6.3. **Families of children with additional needs may have come across outdated advice regarding stopping use of the home language.** All staff in our schools must reassure families that we support all our families in providing a positive language role model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent.
- 6.4. **Establishing strong links and frequent communication with families is essential.** An Autistic child is best supported when families and schools work together and where schools are constantly striving to maintain, develop and strengthen our links with families. When working with families with EAL, strategies for effective communication must be identified and used consistently. Some families may need more communication and more opportunities to visit school, so for example, work can be shown rather than talked about.

## 7. Research

7.1. The DFE (2020) in **English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language** reported:

*“Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be assessed at a lower English proficiency level. 39% of SEN pupils were assessed as competent or fluent in English compared to 64% of pupils with no SEN.”* (DFE, 2020)

The DFE pupil statistics show that 20.2% of pupils were recorded as having a first language known or believed to be other than English (DFE 2023). Given this is an increase from 2021/22 and continuing a recent trend of increases, this highlights how important EAL provision is for schools.

7.2. The report also outlines the link between English proficiency and attainment at all Key Stages.

7.3. The link between attainment and English proficiency is also emphasised in The Bell Foundation November 23 policy briefing:

7.4. Research tells us that reading builds on oral language competence and so learning to read requires making links between the spoken language and the writing system (Abbot, 2013)

7.5. Edwards (2013) reports that there are a range of different skills needed to acquire literacy, some of the most important are:

7.5.1. Graphophonic skills – learning to recognise words or letter combinations to decode new words.

7.5.2. Semantic skills – using understanding of the text to supply a word that makes the rest of the sentence make sense.

7.5.3. Syntactic skills – using knowledge about the language of the text to understand what kind of word will fit.

7.5.4. Bibliographic skills – using experience of particular written genres to predict a word or check it makes sense.

7.6. Learners who have limited literacy skills in their first language have to make up ground in all of these dimensions. In the long term, they should be able to build on their first language skills to help them, and EAL learners tend to have greater phonological awareness than their peers.

7.7. Edwards (2013) also advocates that literacy support for EAL learners should not focus entirely on phonics. ‘attention to phonics should not take place in isolation from activities that promote vocabulary building, meaning making and comprehension’ (Edwards 2013)

7.8. The Bell Foundation recommends that A strong emphasis should be placed on these children and young people learning about learning, including thinking about themselves as learners, and school/classroom routines. [The Education Endowment Foundation provide useful recommendations for teaching self-regulated learning and metacognition.](#)

7.9. Further research and advice on interventions to raise achievement in English language and/or literacy in pupils with EAL can be found in this review by Victoria Murphy.

## 8. Approach to supporting EAL families and pupils

Vanguard School is situated in a Lambeth, London. Our students are from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Currently 6.5% of the students at our school are categorised as English as an Additional Language. The predominant languages spoken are; Arabic, Portuguese, and Spanish, etc. In total there are 4 different languages spoken across the school. We are extremely proud of the diverse community that our school serves.

### 8.1.Data Gathering and Assessment

8.1.1. As part of the admissions process to our schools, parents/carers are asked to disclose their child's ethnicity, home language, first language and religion. This enables the school to support families and the pupil effectively. It is important to understand that all learners are different, and this is certainly the case for autistic pupils who additionally have English as a second language. Pupils may:

- a) already have good language and literacy skills in two or more languages
- b) be beginner EAL learners who have never learnt to read or write in any language.
- c) missed some or all of their education and have not fully developed the language and literacy skills needed for Key stage one or two programmes of study.

8.1.2. Although no longer a statutory requirement, our school continue to assess all EAL students against the DfE proficiency in English codes.

The codes are;

**A – New to English**

**B – Early Acquisition**

**C – Developing Competence**

**D – Competent**

**E – Fluent**

See Appendix 1 for EAL stages of development (The Bell Foundation)

8.1.3. The Bell Foundation has useful guidance and toolkit including an audit for reviewing practice and developing and EAL action plan: [EAL and SEND: Guidance for Integrated Provision in Schools - The Bell Foundation \(bell-foundation.org.uk\)](#)

### 8.2. School/Class Ethos

8.2.1. Our schools seek to ensure that all pupils are enabled to have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. EAL pupils should be encouraged to play a full part in all learning opportunities. EAL learners make the best progress within a whole school context, where pupils are educated with their peers. The school structure, pastoral care and overall ethos aim to help EAL pupils integrate into the school whilst valuing diversity. Children that enter the school with little or no English should be given the opportunity to complete assessments and school work in their home language, a program of support for a transition of languages will be implemented when children are secure in their new setting. We will also ensure:

- a) All staff promote a school which is socially and culturally inclusive;

- b) Teachers recognise the pupil's first language, identifying their strengths and boosting the individual's self-esteem, and enabling the pupil to become a bi-lingual;
- c) Staff acknowledge the time it takes to become fluent in an additional language, with a good command of the range of language needed for successful learning and participation in the class;
- d) Support is given for however long is necessary and we understand this may be beyond the time a pupil appears orally fluent.

### 8.3. Teaching and Learning

8.3.1. The Bell Foundation (2021) reported that:

“It takes two-thirds of pupils who are new to English at the start of Reception more than six years to progress to the highest levels of proficiency. This is important as it demonstrates that EAL pupils who are acquiring proficiency need additional support in order to achieve academic success”

Liberty Academy Trust aim for all EAL pupils to;

- a) immediately feel part of the school
- b) be prioritised for additional support to develop proficiency and language in context
- c) experience their full curriculum entitlement.

8.3.2. Additional support in class and some small group literacy teaching will be beneficial in the early stages, although pupils should not necessarily be withdrawn from Maths or practical subjects where they can usually make good progress whatever their language level in English. Staff can help pupils learning English as an additional language in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- a) Assess pupils needs carefully and identify strengths and areas of difficulty.
- b) Plan differentiated work for EAL pupils if necessary.
- c) Provide clear learning objectives.
- d) use appropriate materials and support to enable learners to participate in lessons.
- e) Identify Key language for each curriculum area and teach and reinforce this explicitly.
- f) Provide opportunities for speaking and listening and use made of drama techniques and role play as appropriate.
- g) Use additional visual support e.g. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, demonstration and use of gesture.
- h) Give additional verbal support e.g. repetition, modelling, peer support.
- i) Use collaborative activities that involve purposeful talk and encourage and support active participation.
- j) Ensure scaffolding is provided for language and learning e.g. talk frames, writing frames.
- k) Using accessible texts and materials that support pupil's language/cultural needs e.g. bilingual books/ artefacts.
- l) Focus on reading for meaning rather than simply decoding.
- m) Use accessible texts and materials that suit both children's ages and levels of learning.
- n) Ensuring that pupils are engaged through visual and interactive teaching.
- o) Provide support through ICT, translators.
- p) Use a buddy system. Schools could consider implementation of : The Young Interpreter Scheme.
- q) In grouping, ensure pupils are given opportunities to work with pupils with similar

cognitive ability, pupils who have developed a good age-appropriate level of English and pupils who speak the same language in the group.

- r) Use of vocab walls / posters to support learning of key vocabulary and key concepts.
- s) Use a range of resources like talk frames, paired activities, writing frames, sentence structure prompts, mind map, bilingual dictionaries, peer support, differentiated activities, key word lists.
- t) Use home or first language where appropriate and if possible.
- u) Allow students time to practice new language
- v) Use visual support of all kinds (diagrams, maps, charts, pictures)
- w) Encourage pupils to contribute and give more than one-word answers.
- x) Monitoring progress carefully and ensuring that EAL pupils are set appropriate and challenging learning objectives.
- y) Recognise that EAL pupils may need more time to process answers.
- z) Ensure that there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing.
- aa) Deploy Learning mentors effectively to provide support.
- bb) Encourage pupils to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another.
- cc) Ensure that subject specific teaching such as mathematical calculation methods are understood by pupils and parents. Methods for example long multiplication or division may be taught differently in different cultures. Provide additional support where needed.

8.3.3. See also Appendix 2 for the Bell Foundation 5 Principles to guide EAL pedagogy.

#### **8.4. Respecting Diversity**

8.4.1. Our schools place a huge value on a child developing as an individual according to their religious, cultural and personal beliefs and aims to work with children and their families to support this. Diversity should not be seen as a one-off event that happens in a particular month or day. Diversity should pervade all aspects of the school's provision. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Culturally diverse assemblies/plays/ performances.
- b) Ensuring the curriculum, resources and environment are culturally diverse and represent the school population.
- c) Trips to culturally related places in the community (e.g.: local temples, synagogues, mosques etc.).
- d) Working closely with parents of pupils to understand their perception of Autism in their culture.
- e) Displaying work done by pupils so learning about different languages and social cultures is constantly showcased in the School.

#### **8.5. Translators and translation services**

8.5.1. When required our schools will recruit the services of the local authority (LA) translation services.

8.5.2. Our schools will seek to build links with the local communities and families and obtain information on recommended local contacts who may act as translators for pupils and families. The school should also contact the local authority to understand what services are available and can be provided in support. Parents/guardians are also welcomed to involve personal translators (either professionals or friends/family members) in the support of their child. Often personal translators accompany families to annual reviews



and parents evening to support the communication between parents and school.

## **9. Responsibilities**

### **9.1. Principal**

- Monitor the effectiveness of EAL support.
- Monitor the progress of EAL pupils.
- Communicate with Director of Education about effectiveness of provision and policy.
- Ensure the Admissions Lead and/or SENCO has sufficient time to gather information in readiness for transition.

### **9.2. Admissions Lead / SENCO**

- To obtain, collate and distribute information on new pupils to relevant teacher. This includes:
  - Language(s) spoken at home;
  - From the previous school, information on level of English studied/used;
  - Details of curriculum at previous school.

### **9.3. Director of Education**

- Evaluate and update the policy annually.
- Ensure the Executive Board and Trustees are informed of matters related to EAL pupils as appropriate.

### **9.4. SENCO**

- Monitor the progress of EAL learners through existing Literacy/subject monitoring.
- Provide support and advice to class teachers.

### **9.5. Teachers**

- All involved in teaching EAL learners liaise regularly (by using departmental meeting time).
- Teachers communicate all EAL learners' progress to parents, the SENCO and members of the staff team as appropriate.
- Ensure parents and staff are aware of the school's policy on pupils with EAL.
- Ensure relevant information on pupils with EAL is passed on to all staff.
- Ensure training in planning, teaching and assessing EAL learners is accessed.
- Ensure challenging targets for pupils learning EAL are set and met.
- Maintain knowledge about pupils' abilities and needs in English and other subjects.
- Use this knowledge effectively in curriculum planning, classroom teaching, use of resources and use of resources and pupil grouping.

## **10. References**

National Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Equality Act 2010

Race Relations Act 1976

DFE 2020 English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language

DFE 2023 [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

EAL and SEND: Guidance for Integrated Provision in Schools - The Bell Foundation (bell-foundation.org.uk)

Abbot, M., 2013, What makes reading difficult for EAL students? NALDIC Quarterly Vol. 13 No. 1 pp 5-14  
Edwards, V., 2013, The politics of phonics, implications for bilingual learners, NALDIC Quarterly Vol. 13 No. 1 pp15-20  
Hutchinson, J (2018) Educational Outcomes of Children with an additional language. Education Policy Institute  
Murphy, V (2015) A systematic review of intervention research examining English language and literacy development in children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) EEF / The Bell Foundation  
The Bell foundation (2021) [English as an Additional Language, Proficiency in English and rate of progression: Pupil, school and LA variation - The Bell Foundation \(bell-foundation.org.uk\)](#)  
The Bell Foundation (2023) [Supporting the Education of Children who use English as a Second Language \(EAL\)](#)

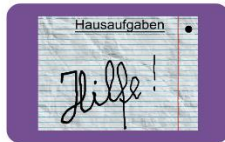
## **11. Useful resources**

EAL and SEND: Guidance for Integrated Provision in Schools - The Bell Foundation ([bell-foundation.org.uk](#))  
New guide supports bilingual children with autism - West Sussex County Council  
Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning | EEF ([educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk](#))

# Appendix 1



## EAL Proficiency Scales



Code: A



Code: B



Code: C



Code: D



Code: E

New to English	Early Acquisition	Developing Competence	Competent	Fluent
<p>May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying / repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English.</p> <p><b>Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.</b></p>	<p>May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative / accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.</b></p>	<p>May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English.</p> <p><b>Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.</b></p>	<p>Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Needs some / occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.</b></p>	<p>Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language.</p> <p><b>Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.</b></p>

Code N = Not Yet Assessed

**EAL Definitions of Development: (According to the Bell Assessment, also used by DFE)**

## Five principles to guide EAL pedagogy

 <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Multilingualism as an asset</b></p> <p>Encouraging learners to use and develop their full linguistic repertoire is highly beneficial.</p> <p>Learners' multilingualism – their ability to listen, speak, read and view, and/or write in one or more languages and/or scripts beyond English – is a valuable resource. Maintaining and further developing learners' home languages and other languages they know results in greater cognitive flexibility and stronger academic performance.</p> <p>Teachers and support staff should, where possible, deploy pedagogies which include the use of different languages. Learners using EAL should be encouraged to codeswitch and translate between any languages they know to support their subject content learning and the acquisition of academic English.</p>	 <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>High expectations with appropriate support</b></p> <p>Having high expectations of learners using EAL while offering them the language support that they need is beneficial to their learning.</p> <p>Learners using EAL, like all learners, benefit from high expectations which inspire, motivate, and challenge them. Teachers and support staff should set goals that stretch and challenge learners of all backgrounds, abilities, and levels of proficiency in English, provide them with appropriately demanding activities, and expect their active engagement and concentration.</p> <p>Unlike first language English learners, those using EAL have a double task ahead of them – simultaneously learning the English language and learning content through English. This means that teaching and support staff should set high expectations while offering the right level of language support and scaffolding for learners to access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge/skill.</p>	 <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Integrated focus on content and language</b></p> <p>Focusing on language while teaching subject content is crucial to the progress and attainment of learners using EAL.</p> <p>Cognitive and academic abilities of learners for whom English is an additional language are separate from their English language abilities. Although multilingual learners may be fully capable of the cognitive and academic demands of curricula in their home language(s), they may be unable to access fully a similar curriculum in English due to the English language barrier; unfortunately, the curriculum does not wait.</p> <p>The curriculum should be designed in such a way that all learners' needs can be met in the classroom, and any additional support required should be provided in the classroom.</p> <p>English language development should be integrated and embedded into the curriculum within language-rich mainstream classes. Any withdrawal of learners using EAL from a mainstream class should be for a specific purpose, time-limited and linked to the work of the mainstream class.</p>	 <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Effective and holistic pupil assessment</b></p> <p>EAL assessment builds a broad picture of the learner, which enables teachers to plan appropriate and targeted support.</p> <p>Effective assessment provides teachers with the information needed to adapt teaching for learners using EAL. Initial diagnostic assessment should gather linguistic and educational information, such as information about learners' language and literacy practices, prior education, and current cognitive skills. Initial assessment of learners' proficiency in English should include assessment of listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing.</p> <p>Conducting a first language assessment provides useful information. Formal standardised tests designed to assess the reading age, verbal reasoning, spelling, and reading comprehension of first-language English learners are not always suitable for assessing learners using EAL.</p> <p>When assessment is used to evaluate conceptual understanding, it helps to reduce the linguistic demands of the instructions. Continuous formative assessment should include both assessment of English language development using an EAL-relevant assessment framework, and teacher assessment of learning in different subjects.</p>	 <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Social inclusion</b></p> <p>Including learners using EAL and their family in all aspects of school life improves their wellbeing and motivation for learning and is beneficial for the school.</p> <p>In order to have opportunities for success in school, learners using EAL need to feel safe and secure from day one and need not be excluded from any aspect of school life. Schools should foster an inclusive culture in which learners using EAL are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and to join mixed-language friendship groups.</p> <p>Social inclusion is successful where schools create respectful relationships with learners' families and the wider communities, striving to understand families' backgrounds, cultures, and prior experiences. Some parents of children who use EAL, especially those who are new to English and to the English school system themselves, face additional challenges to parental participation. Therefore, schools should have accessible communications and expectations for all staff, schoolwide, to build reciprocal relationships which actively promote family involvement and mutual understanding.</p>
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