



The British International
School of Brussels

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English as an Additional Language Policy

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Introduction

At BISB all children are encouraged to aim for the highest possible standards. The school endeavors to offer equality of access to the curriculum to all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language.

We offer specific support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils and also strive to create a positive and welcoming environment. We achieve this through a whole school approach that embraces multiculturalism and celebrates diversity as a positive experience for everyone within the school. We believe that by offering structured support children who arrive in the school with little experience of English can quickly flourish as confident and successful learners alongside their mother-tongue English peers.

Relevant School Aims

- sustain a friendly, safe and interesting environment that stimulates and encourages the fascination of learning.
- treat everyone in our school community as an individual, valuing their contributions and accomplishments.
- develop good home-school interaction and together improve the quality of learning.
- ensure that our children follow a well planned and stimulating programme of study, with a wide variety of learning opportunities, that increases knowledge and promotes understanding.
- determine and improve the capabilities, proficiencies and talents of each child in all sections of the curriculum.
- work with the children to attain the high standards that we expect from them in all aspects of life in school.
- help the children develop a sense of right and wrong as the foundation for relationships, alongside consideration of the rights, feelings and well-being of all others.
- enable the children to make a positive contribution to our multicultural society and to enjoy life, appreciating and coping with its disappointments and triumphs.

Appendices

Aims and Objectives of EAL

- To offer children, regardless of their initial English language competency, full access to the academic curriculum.
- To respect and value the individual pupil's first language and culture.
- To actively encourage EAL pupils to integrate and participate in class activities as quickly as possible, whilst at the same time being sensitive to foster self confidence and esteem.
- To develop strong links between the school and home so that parents are able to collaborate and provide possible support with the first language at home.
- To identify quickly if a child receiving EAL support is having difficulties accessing the curriculum for non linguistic reasons and then to offer them the appropriate support needed.
- To monitor regularly children who no longer require specific EAL support to ensure their continuing progression.

Definition of an EAL pupil

An EAL pupil is someone whose main language is not English and therefore he or she may require some level of guidance to flourish in an English-speaking school. Some who have previous experience of English schooling may cope immediately - both academically and socially - and require no support, but more typically they may fit one of the following profiles:

- A complete beginner of English.
- A pupil with some experience of English but who is not yet fluent and has not yet reached social proficiency level.
- A pupil who speaks English fairly fluently but is not as yet achieving his or her full academic potential in an English-speaking environment.

We use the term 'Bilingual' for such children noting that this is done within the U.K education system but this does not imply an equal proficiency in two languages. Instead it acknowledges that pupils function in more than one language on a daily basis.

Identification of a pupil requiring EAL support

Initially a potential EAL pupil is likely to be identified by information from their parent either via the application form or verbally. The next means of identification is likely to be the class teacher who will inform the EAL teacher of their observations within the first few days of their time in school. A pupil who is identified as having limited experience of English will be assessed by the EAL teacher (considerations such as age, shyness and possible culture shock will be taken into account before this assessment takes place). The aim is to ascertain the general competency of English in the key areas of: speaking, listening and understanding, reading and writing. This could include a combination of the following assessment methods:

- Standardised tests
- Oral interview

- Short reading/listening comprehension
- Informal discussion based on picture/object prompts
- Short writing exercises in response to a topic or series of questions

After the assessment, the EAL and class teacher will discuss and decide on the best means of providing structured support for the pupil so that they can directly access the curriculum whilst at the same time strengthening English language skills.

Possible support strategies for EAL pupils within the school

Possible support strategies could include:

- Placing of new EAL pupils wherever possible with a child who has the same 'first language'.
- A 'buddy' system to ensure whenever possible that children who have difficulty communicating are not left out at playtimes.
- on their arrival, a tour of the school with the EAL teacher using picture and word aides to help explain the daily routines.
- Pre-tutoring may be provided for some sections of the curriculum, after discussion between the class and EAL teacher.
- Provision of story props/scaffolding/writing frames/DART (Directed Activities Related to Texts) activities for literacy tasks.
- Peer modeling in reading and other activities to provide strong linguistic role models.
- Displays of children's' work in the school that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Visual aides/ support for topic work.
- Varied group strategies used in the classroom e.g. mixed, interest and supportive experts.
- Use of various ICT programmes that reinforce language skills and some that also offer first language support.

Implementation of teaching and support strategies

The EAL teacher will provide either in class support or small group withdrawals that offer EAL pupils the chance to work on specific EAL goals.

During the first few months of English language acquisition, short withdrawal periods predominate so that the children feel confident to try out their new skills in a quiet, familiar environment. Here there are not the same time pressures as in the main classroom and therefore extra thinking time and any necessary repetition, are both possible.

Within the main classroom EAL pupils are supported to enable them to access the curriculum. Differentiated work that takes account of their linguistic abilities is provided when required.

Role of the EAL teacher within the school

As well as provide direct support in the classroom setting or one to one/ small group work, the EAL teacher will:

- Provide to their class teacher an initial verbal assessment of the level of English proficiency of new pupils who may require support.
- Work in collaboration with class teachers in planning and target setting for both EAL specific and general curriculum objectives.
- Offer advice to colleagues on possible strategies and additional materials that could be used to support EAL pupils in a whole class situation.
- Monitor pupils progress and to maintain an individual profile on each child receiving EAL support. Recording of assessments is made on a conservative basis.

Assessment and monitoring of EAL pupils

We use the QCA/NASSEA step scale system from the U.K to measure pupils English language competency skills in the four key areas of literacy. Step one denotes the very early stages of learning a new language and finishes with step seven (a level of English that can be compared directly with monolingual children thus being assessable in terms of the national curriculum). The step system has been designed to provide a realistic measure of linguistic competency and be comparable with national curriculum levels. Class teachers should be aware that limited linguistic competency can affect the national curriculum levels achieved by a pupil who is often unable to demonstrate their true conceptual ability when working in a new language.

The child is assessed in terms of their step levels achieved and by adding anecdotal evidence which paints a picture of general confidence levels and highlights curriculum areas that might need additional linguistic support. Consequent procedures are agreed by the class teacher and the EAL teacher on a termly basis.

Home school links

Parents can support the work of their child in school in several ways. Even if the parents are not fluent speakers of English they should feel free to provide support and discuss school work with their child in their own language. Parents are also encouraged to attend the regular teacher / parent meetings to discuss progress where they can review their child's EAL profile and also meet separately with the EAL teacher.

Copies of the relevant QCA/NASSEA documentation are available on request from school or from several education authority sites on the internet e.g.

www.plymouth.gov.uk/guidance_on_qca_eal_steps_assessment_system.doc