



English as an Additional Language

English as an Additional Language (EAL) refers to any pupil learning and using English as an additional or second language.

‘A pupil’s first language is any language other than English that a child was exposed to during early development and continues to be exposed to in the home or community.’

If a child has been exposed to a language other than English, it is important for us to know, regardless of how well they now speak English.

EAL learners are a diverse group and there is a range of definitions for an EAL pupil:

- children who are growing up in bilingual families (having two languages spoken at home)
- children who have lived in the UK a long time, or were born in the UK, but speak one language at home and another in school
- children who began life in another country, where another language was spoken, and who now live in the UK where English is the language spoken in school where they attend

At Beever Primary School, we recognise that a pupil's ability to thrive is linked to an inclusive environment where they feel valued and confident. As with other groups of learners, our teachers adapt learning to make sure that all pupils may access the learning provided. They do this by involving learners in activities where the language is challenging but appropriate to their abilities and interests.

EAL at Beever Primary School

We understand that our pupils are all learning English at different stages and this is reflected in the adaptations and inclusive practices that underpin our approach to teaching and learning. We use effective systems to assess and develop pupils' proficiency in English alongside classroom practices informed by high-quality research.

We want all of our pupils to achieve fluency in English – both at a social and an academic level and we value the extent that families contribute to this, however we recognise the importance of pupils maintaining their mother tongue.

Our EAL team works to support pupils at every stage of their academic journey. This support structure includes, but is not limited to:

- Supporting pupils as they settle into our school.
- Focused teaching and interventions to ensure pupils have the opportunity to learn and develop their language skills with the support of expert staff.
- Inclusive classroom environments that provide good language role models, immersion in English and the opportunity to learn in a language-rich setting.
- Support from peers to ensure pupils feel included, valued and celebrated as a member of our school community.
- Training for staff to ensure they feel equipped and empowered to support pupils in their English learning experience.

There are lots of valuable online resources that can help support learning English as an additional language, but we also recognise and value the contributions families can make to developing pupils' skills in home languages. A strong knowledge of the home language is absolutely crucial in developing pupils' sense of their identity and accelerates their progress in learning English. It is important for families to be accurate when completing their child's admission form and declare the home language the child is exposed to from birth and daily. Bilingualism is viewed by our school to be a skill to be proud about.

How can teachers best meet the needs of EAL learners?

Certain principles help teachers adapt their lessons to the needs of EAL learners. By following these, teachers can help these children reach their educational goals and play a positive part in our school life, the community and society as a whole.

The potential among EAL learners for bilingualism is particularly important, as it increases mental ability such as problem-solving and creativity. Bilingualism gives EAL learners a fantastic advantage when looking for a job later on, too. Our teachers therefore consider the role of learners' first language and are aware that the acquisition of a new language goes hand-in-hand with cognitive and academic development.

Here are some of the ways our teachers ensure EAL learners can access the curriculum and reach their full potential:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing
- English speaking talk partners to help develop vocabulary
- Key focus on building up vocabulary related to all subjects
- Alternative phrasing of instructions and objectives
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc.

- Visual timetables in every classroom
- Bilingual resources where needed, e.g. on-line support, texts, key word lists
- Writing frames
- Directed activities related to core texts
- Opportunities for role play
- Regular opportunities for feedback from staff
- Learning progression moves from concrete to abstract
- Further support for pupils' language development is also provided outside the formal curriculum, e.g. in assemblies, external visits, internal visitors and extra-curricular clubs etc.

Teaching Strategies

- help the child to learn some useful phrases, "Where is..." "What's that?... " and the routines of the classroom so they can communicate with their peer group
- use of carefully selected sentence stems such as "I like.." "I can see a..." "It is..."
- use PSED and Circle times to model responses
- provide lots of books in various languages including the pupil's home language
- use the home corner to reflect aspects of the pupil's culture and to provide objects and toys to familiarise the pupil with the new local culture
- talk with the other pupils about the different languages spoken
- invite speakers of the pupil's language and others to come in for story telling activities
- learn some words in the pupil's language, including the basics such as yes, no, thank you, hello, goodbye, numbers and colours
- use dual language texts and audio/video stories in English and the learner's language
- class activities inclusive of the new learner and proficient monolingual English-speaking pupils when applicable
- use lots of photographs and provide visual aids through story props, magnetic cut outs, puppets, masks and dressing up clothes , including positive images that reflect the new pupil's background, to stimulate talk and promote vocabulary development
- provide dual language or multilingual signs around school
- provide lots of 'hands-on' experience, so the children can learn the new language through participating in activities that support their cognitive development
- use small group activities as a basis of one-to-one talk with the child so that you have something stimulating and meaningful to talk about

- think-aloud', that is, talk through your actions and use gestures as you introduce and participate in a new activity
- ensure that adults use a variety of question styles to encourage the pupil to use a variety of language functions
- allow at least 10 seconds of 'think time' for children when they are asked to answer a question
- accept that there may be a period of non-verbal communication on the part of the pupil; the pupil will be observing, listening and learning during this silent period time
- use a home-school book to communicate with parents
- invite parents into the classroom to read to their child in their first language

Learners of EAL and the Silent Period

Many children whose first language is not English go through a "silent period" when they first come into school in this country. This may last for several months but eventually these children do begin to speak at school. Priscilla Clarke's strategies listed below offer advice on ways to help children through the silent period:

- continue talking even when children do not respond
- persistent inclusion in small groups with other children
- use of varied questions
- inclusion of other children as the focus in the conversation (pair the learner with a buddy and ask questions of both children)
- use the first language
- accept non-verbal responses
- praise even minimal efforts
- continue to expect that the child will respond
- structure lessons to encourage child-to-child interaction
- provide activities which reinforce language practice through role play
- remember this is not a passive stage: all the time they are in their silent period, children are taking in everything that is going on around them, including the new language