



# EAL Policy

January 2017

CHASING HORIZONS

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## Rationale

At the Gipsy Hill Federation, we believe that every child is unique. We value individuality and we are committed to providing opportunities for all children to achieve their best. We promote children's strengths and challenge every child accordingly. We also aim to identify needs early in their educational career and provide appropriate support. At all times, the federation aims to remove barriers to learning and thus ensure equality of opportunity for all. Throughout each child's time at the federation, we value the involvement of the child, the family and the team working around the child at all times.

At the Gipsy Hill Federation just under half of the pupils across the federation have English as an Additional Language. This policy aims to outline the provision for children with English as an Additional Language who require additional support as well our approaches to ensuring all pupils with English as an Additional Language meet their full potential.

### [What is English as an Additional Language \(EAL\)?](#)

The Department for Education defines a child as having EAL where a first language, other than English, is recorded. This would be recorded where a child was exposed to a home language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community.

#### The Importance of the first language

Parents should be encouraged to speak their home language. This builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted. An additional language is an advantage. English should not replace the home language, it should develop alongside it. This has the following benefits:

- Young children learn to communicate best within their close circle of family and friends. Their home language is important for bonding, trust, affection, security and authority. Language is important for social and personal development. It is rooted in cultural identity and contributes to the development of personal values and a positive view of one's place in society.
- Children will be surrounded by English in their early years setting, but they will continue to think in their home language at this stage. This means it is important to keep their home language active for developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Children's home language supports their learning of English as an Additional Language. It teaches them how language works. Bilingual learners transfer skills from one language to another.



## How do we identify an EAL learner?

At the Gipsy Hill Federation progress in the acquisition of English is assessed and monitored regularly using stages of English (represented by one of the 5 National English Proficiency Level codes as specified by the DfE). It can take up to 7 years to reach fluency.

### PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH - 5 STAGE MODEL OF EAL ACQUISITION



## How do we support EAL learners?

At the Gipsy Hill Federation we personalise and differentiate our planning to support the progress of all individual learners. For EAL learners, this will include visual support and resources; communication friendly approaches such as gestural support; explicit teaching of vocabulary and sentence structure; writing and speaking frames; word banks; working wall displays in the classrooms; good language models from all staff around the school; the use of talk partners for opportunities for oral rehearsal; talk for writing strategies etc. Children might also receive additional support in class or from specialist staff which might include pre-teaching vocabulary as well as opportunities to focus more specifically on language acquisition. Where appropriate, children will have access to additional resources such as dual language books, picture dictionaries, ipads and computers.

### New Arrivals

New arrivals are children who arrive in school at different ages (outside the normal nursery or reception admissions) and may be new to English.

During the induction meeting with office staff, where possible office staff will establish whether a child is exposed to an additional language at home. This will be shared with relevant staff.

All new children will be buddied up with a peer, ideally a child who speaks their first language. This buddy will introduce themselves at the start of the first day and will support school staff to introduce the child to school routines and locations of key areas, such as the toilet, as well as ensure that the new child feels welcome, relaxed and safe.

Within the first week, the child will be assessed by a member of the inclusion team, who will then recommend provision. This provision might be in the form of classroom resources or additional support. They will also be able to provide class teachers with advice on how best to support the child day-to-day and identify useful resources available electronically, in school and online.

It is recognised by all staff at the Gipsy Hill Federation that children who are new to English initially have a silent period, which might last up to a month. Staff continue to communicate and interact positively with the child during this period but do not put pressure on the child to speak or repeat language. A range of engaging activities will be provided for the child.

Should the pupil arrive during the summative assessment window, teachers will use their professional judgment and seek advice from the inclusion team/senior leadership team regarding how best to approach assessing the child.

What helps children learn a language:

- When they are in a positive, secure and helpful environment.
- When they are interacting with others.
- When the language items they are expected to learn are clear and focused.
- When new language items are presented in a meaningful context.
- When they hear the new language items repeated several times.
- When they have the opportunity to repeat and use the new items themselves.

## How do we ensure that all EAL learners are achieving their full potential?

Teachers formally assess children once a term against age-related expectations. This assessment data is analysed for all children by the senior leadership. In addition to this, a member of the inclusion team specifically tracks progress of all individual children with EAL: children who are not making expected progress are identified; children with inconsistent attainment in reading and writing are highlighted. This information is shared and discussed at the termly pupil progress meeting. This helps the class teacher, SENCO and Senior Leadership Team to identify where additional support needs to be put in place to address language barriers to learning and progress for individual. This additional support can be in class or in a small group intervention with a specialist member of staff.

## What do we mean by barriers to learning?

The National Curriculum (2014) states that it is the responsibility of all teachers to plan their lessons to ensure that there are no barriers to learning for any child or young person, whether they have EAL or additional needs. It is important to note that EAL is not a special educational need often requires a different approach. Barriers to learning that children with EAL might experience are: needing more time to process



information; cultural references; technical and academic language; vocabulary acquisition; language structures; etc. It is also important to note that some children with EAL might not have attended school in their home country, for example, if the school starting age in their country is later or due to political, economic or social factors in their home country. It is important to get to know and understand each child individually so as to best tailor provision in school.

## How do we encourage parents to support their children?

We have an open door policy and encourage and welcome all parents to work in partnership with us for their child to meet their full potential. Parents are welcome to speak to members of staff at the start/end of the school day but we would ask parents to make an appointment for lengthier conversations. Parents are invited to share in their child's learning through events such as work-share assemblies, parents into reading, dual language book libraries, inclusion drop-ins, coffee mornings etc. These will vary from site to site and will be advertised on the website, twitter feed and in the school newsletter.

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