MERTON COURT SCHOOL



EAL POLICY

To be reviewed September 2027 by: EAL Co-ordinator, Headmaster, LT	
Signed by the Headmaster/Proprietor:	
Shared with staff:	3/11/26
Put on the Website:	3/11/26

This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS.

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a child as having English as an Additional Language if "...they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English."

At Merton Court School, we are aware that bilingualism is a strength and that EAL children have a valuable contribution to make. We recognise that all children have individual learning needs and ensure that personalised learning is at the heart of our teaching. We encourage achievement of the highest standard and therefore ensure that all EAL children are provided with the opportunity to learn and make progress. Their progress is evaluated and reviewed regularly with the aim of ensuring that they fulfil their full academic potential.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

SEND Policy
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Anti-bullying Policy
EYFS Policy

Availability

This policy is made available to parents and staff in the following ways, via the staff shared drive, or on request a copy from the school office.

Aims:

The aims of this EAL policy are to define:

- The school's objectives regarding EAL, and how these should be met.
- The organization and management of EAL in the school.
- The nature and level of school support for EAL.

Our school seeks to ensure that all children have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. English is best learnt through the curriculum and EAL children should be encouraged to play a full part in class activities. All teachers are teachers of children with individual needs, and are responsible for developing children's spoken and written English language skills; thereby raising pupil achievement.

Definition:

An EAL child is a child whose first language is not English. This encompasses children who are fully bilingual and all those at different stages of learning English. Although many students 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. An EAL child may be:

- Newly arrived from a foreign country
- Born abroad, but moved to England earlier in their childhood
- Born in the UK, although their family's main language spoken at home is not English.

Categorisation of 'EAL' (using DfE Codes):
In order to aid appropriate planning, EAL children's competence in English can be categorised as detailed below:

New to English [Code A]: 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. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

Early acquisition [Code B]: 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. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.

Developing competence [Code C]: 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. Requires ongoing EAL support to fully access the curriculum.

Competent [Code D]: 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

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meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

Fluent [Code E]: Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

EAL in context at Merton Court School:
Some children joining Merton Court from abroad may go through an initial silent period as they adjust to their new environment. The majority of bilingual children, however, are fluent in English when they join the school. They either consider English to be their first language, whilst also being competent in another family language, or have been brought up by bilingual parents. It is therefore important for all staff to be alert to the fact that EAL needs may become apparent for more competent children as they progress through the school and linguistic demands increase.

Our Provision:
Merton Court makes a clear distinction between EAL and Special Educational Needs: Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught. (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, DfE, 2014 updated 2024)

The school ethos should encourage EAL children to integrate and thrive in a western culture, whilst appreciating their own cultural uniqueness. Providing the children with opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning. As well as ensuring that they have sufficient opportunities to support their language development at home through the school's library of dual language books and the sharing of artefacts in our school culture boxes.

Bilingualism and multiculturalism are assets that should be actively supported and celebrated.

Merton Court School is aware of good practice promoted by such bodies as the Commission for Racial Equality, NALDIC, The British Council and SENJIT. Principles include:

- Activating prior knowledge.
- Provision of a rich contextual background to make input comprehensible.
- Actively encourage comprehensible output.
- Drawing the learner's attention to the relationship between form and function, making key grammatical elements explicit.
- Developing learner independence.

The school aims to develop spoken and written English by:

- Understanding how each lesson can promote language as well as content by analysing the language demands of each lesson.

- Ensuring classroom activities have clear learning objectives and use appropriate materials and support to enable all children, including those with EAL, to participate in lessons.
- Provide a word mat with key vocabulary of each curriculum area, for those that need it.
- Providing sufficient opportunities for talk, whilst being aware that children with EAL may need time to process before being able to confidently engage in speaking.
- Explaining how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes across a range of subjects.
- Providing a range of reading materials that highlight different ways in which English is used.
- Using additional visual support when needed, eg. Posters, pictures, photographs, objects, Makaton symbols, demonstration and use of gesture.
- Providing additional verbal support, eg. Repetition, modelling, peer support.
- Providing scaffolding for language and learning, eg. Talk frames, writing frames, word banks, where necessary.

We also ensure access to the wide curriculum that we provide by:

- Using accessible texts and materials that suit children's ages and levels of learning.
- Providing support through ICT, video or audio materials, readers, dictionaries and translators.
- Using the home or first language where appropriate.

Identification, Assessment, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation:

Identification.

- EAL Children are identified from the Pupil Language Profile completed by parents/carers on entry. This information is used to enter children on the EAL register for staff reference and may be used to determine the most appropriate provision for a particular child.
- And initial assessment of needs would then be made in order to establish the level of support required.
- Children will be identified using the DfE codes A to E as previously mentioned in the policy.

Assessment.

- Competence in English will be assessed termly using The Bell Foundation Assessment Framework.
- Formal and informal testing and assessments are ongoing throughout the school.
- Anecdotal records, kept alongside the daily/weekly planning play important roles in ongoing assessment, monitoring and planning procedures.

- Whenever possible, assessment is undertaken as a partnership between the class teacher, EAL Co-ordinator, parents/guardians and child.

Planning.

- Assessment information is used to identify the child's level of competence. This information is disseminated to staff and informs decisions regarding the most appropriate provision for that child.
- Planning ensures that the curriculum can be accessed by all learners including those with EAL.
- Targets for EAL children are appropriate, challenging and reviewed each term.
- When planning the curriculum, staff take account of the linguistic, cultural and religious background of families.
- Language support is best provided in the classroom. Classroom practice offers an ideal platform for language for speaking, listening, reading and writing within a meaningful context.

Monitoring and Evaluation.

- It may be important for the marking of work to take place in the presence of the child, as oral communication may be more accessible to the child than written feedback.
- Staff regularly observe, assess and record information about the child's developing use of language.
- Targets for EAL learners are appropriate, challenging and reviewed on a regular basis. Children's performance and progress are evaluated for the setting of new targets.
- Form teachers should meet with the EAL co-ordinator when necessary to discuss progress and any further support needed.

Our school aims to address the needs of EAL children within the classroom and encourage that they do not produce separate work. However, there may be times when it will be appropriate for children to be withdrawn from lessons to receive focused support.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher (with the support of the EAL Co-ordinator) to maintain up to date records of EAL children in their class whilst they are in their care.

At Merton Court we recognise that most EAL children are not children with SEND, however, should SEND be identified EAL children will have equal access to school support in conjunction with our SEND Policy. Similarly, EAL children identified as more-able have equal access to the many extension and enrichment activities our More-Able Policy has to offer.

Once proficiency in English is achieved, the progress for EAL children across the curriculum should be rapid and their attainment comparable with, or higher than,

monolingual peers. However, because children may appear fluent in everyday social linguistic contexts, they risk 'plateauing' at this stage, leaving teachers unaware that more explicit teaching is required. Careful monitoring is therefore required, alongside acceptance that all teachers need to be teachers of language within the context of their subject/topics.

- An EAL child can reach the BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) stage within two years of exposure to English.
- A minimum of five years may be required to acquire the CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) stage at the same level as their peers who have English as a mother tongue.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The EAL Co-ordinator is responsible for the following:

- In conjunction with the Headmaster and Senior Leadership team, developing, evaluating and refining the whole-school EAL Policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring EAL children are identified, assessed and monitored, when necessary.
- Keeping the EAL register up to date and ensuring relevant information is passed on to school staff.
- Coordinating provision for EAL children in terms of academic and pastoral support.
- Guiding and supporting school staff in relation to effective teaching approaches for EAL children.
- Liaising with parents/guardians where necessary to involve them in decision making and target setting.

At Merton Court, EAL is regarded as a whole school responsibility and, as a result, subject and class teachers should:

- Be aware of EAL children and their needs.
- Be aware of different cultural and behavioural expectations and attitude.
- Plan teaching and learning activities to foster language development.
- Liaise with the EAL Co-ordinator when necessary.
- Plan their teaching to support EAL children in reaching their full potential.

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