

St Mary Magdalene C of E Primary School
Headteacher: Mrs S Pearson
Assistant Headteachers: Miss E Cave and Mrs R Turvey



EAL Policy

March 2026

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **March 2027**.

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Our Philosophy

In our family, we have the courage to embody Jesus' love for us. We put others' needs above our own. We act with integrity and respect. And when others fall short of our expectations, we support them to atone and extend our forgiveness. In doing this, we prepare children to live life in all its fullness: its joys and celebrations, its sorrows and struggles. The values which are most pertinent to this policy, alongside their links, are detailed below:

Courage

We are called to create an environment where both children and staff aspire to be, and give, their best. Everyone is emboldened to take risks, overcome challenges and be courageous in their efforts to achieve their potential. Leaders challenge poor school attendance in order that children can access learning and:

- gain knowledge, skills and experiences to navigate life in an evolving world; and
- develop characteristics such as self-belief, ambition, and resilience to overcome life's challenges.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you." (Joshua 1:9)

Love

Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person, and Christians are called to follow him in this. In our family, love impels us to:

- put others' needs above our own;
- act with humility and without entitlement;
- empower all our community to flourish and succeed;
- provide a haven of compassion and safety, where children and adults know that they are cherished; and
- support those who are struggling to attend school because they are experiencing suffering and sadness.

"Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:14)

Respect

We seek to model to children an ethos of living well together. The flourishing of pupils goes hand in hand with the flourishing of the wider school community: staff, families, governors and friends of the school. Just as Jesus respected people by taking the time to care for them, we endeavor to:

- celebrate the Christian faith;
- foster deep respect for other cultures, faiths and traditions;
- provide an inclusive environment where special provision is afforded to those with disabilities or special educational needs; and
- challenge inequality.

"Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12)

Forgiveness

Faults, flaws, and mistakes are an unavoidable part of human life. Though Jesus preached the importance of repentance, even in moments of great personal torture, he prayed for forgiveness for his tormentors. Therefore, in our family, we seek to:

- hold ourselves and others accountable for our/their actions, including school attendance;
- have a robust approach to dealing with persistent absenteeism;
- repent when we fall short of our own and others' expectations; and

- forgive others for their indiscretions.

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” (Luke 17:3)

Honesty

An honest person makes a habit of making accurate, trustworthy statements about life, self, others, and God; they represent themselves just as they are and tell others the truth about themselves. That said, the Bible tells us that honesty should always be accompanied by gentleness (Colossians 4:6). With this in mind, we strive to build kind and trusting relationships by:

- speaking and acting with integrity;
- ensuring that children have a strong voice in relation to their attendance at school, and acting on this; and
- working openly and compassionately with families in relation to pupils' attendance, even when messages might be difficult to give or receive.

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

Statement of Intent

- Provide a safe setting in which to learn, where children, parents, governors and staff know that they are valued
- Develop the curriculum to extend the needs and fascinations of all children
- Nurture the aspirations and hopes of all children so they can achieve highly
- Ensure that all children make good or better progress
- Facilitate high quality training for staff to equip them with the skills to ensure that all children flourish
- Welcome the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences pupils with EAL contribute to the school.
- Ensure strategies are in place to support pupils with EAL.
- Enable pupils with EAL to become confident, and to acquire the language skills needed to reach their full academic potential.

1. Terminology

The term EAL (English as an additional language) can refer to:

- **First Stage EAL Learners** – International New Arrivals who are new to English (This category can also include Foundation Stage children who have not been exposed to much English before starting school)
- **Second stage EAL learners** - children who may have been here for a few years and may have learnt basic interpersonal communicative skills [BICS]. These are detailed in the NASSEA Steps 1-3 in Appendix 1.
- **Advanced EAL learners** - is a term used by Ofsted to describe children who have had considerable exposure to English and are no longer in the early stages of English language acquisition. These are children who, often born in this country, appear to be fluent in ordinary everyday conversational contexts (BICS) but require continued support in order to develop the cognitive and academic language necessary for academic success (CALP – these are exemplified in the NASSEA Steps 4-6 in Appendix 1.

2. EAL Teaching Support

The school employs the following teachers with expertise in supporting pupils with EAL:

- Sarah Pearson – Headteacher
- Emily Cave – Assistant Headteacher and Behaviour and Inclusion Lead

These teachers can support staff with:

- The induction of newly arrived pupils
- Conducting initial assessments of pupils with EAL
- Teaching small groups of pupils with EAL
- Providing pedagogical support and advise on strategies to support and include pupils with EAL.
- Advising on ways to differentiate work for pupils with EAL
- Encouraging and supporting pupils to maintain and develop their first language
- Developing relationships between the school and parents of pupils with EAL
- Securing and providing training to ensure staff development
- Acting as consultants to staff on language-related issues
- Acting as consultants to staff on equal opportunity and race equality issues

3. The role of school staff members

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure the development of pupils with EAL. Staff should remember these key messages:

- Children who are new to English face two tasks in school. They have to learn English and they have to learn through English.
- The curriculum itself is an excellent framework for learning EAL. This is because children develop language best when they hear it in meaningful contexts and need to use it for real purposes.
- Many new arrivals go through a lengthy silent period and this is quite normal. It doesn't mean the child is not learning. A great deal of receptive learning will be going on.
- Children who have a well-developed first language have a lot of transferable skills, concepts, and knowledge about how language works.
- Practical tasks will be the most accessible activities, and the best opportunities for learning English.
- When teachers know about differences between the way things work in the child's first language and the way things work in English they can support learning by making these explicit to the child early on.
- Continuing to develop the first language and using it for cognitively demanding purposes will support achievement and help the development of English.
- First Stage EAL learners can become conversationally fluent in a relatively short length of time - 2 to 3 years (BICS). It takes much longer and requires specific support to develop language for learning. (CALP)
- Strategies that support children learning EAL benefit a lot of other pupils too, such as providing a good model of spoken English.
- Sometimes, children can be overwhelmed in a new country and setting and their behaviour may be disconcerting. See below for strategies to support:

Behaviour displayed	What to do
<p>Withdrawn, not joining in activities, avoiding interaction, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe this; it is common for New Arrivals to experience a “silent period” where they don’t seem to be engaging. In fact, they are carefully watching and absorbing routines, checking what happens, what language is being used, etc. • There is no set period for this stage; some children can take as long as 6 months before they start interacting. • If this carries on, you need to raise it as a concern and engage parents and other practitioners.
<p>Appears shocked and out of their depth (under “culture shock”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is normal; be patient, encouraging and welcoming; show interest in them as a person, but offer them space if they just want to be on their own. • If possible, try to introduce them to other New Arrivals in a similar position, or other pupils who have already been through this (they can act as models). • If this attitude persists, you may need to raise it as a concern.
<p>Undermining experiences in the new environment (i.e. “I hate this; I hate this weather; I hate England”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be used (often sub-consciously) as a defence mechanism; occasionally, it is also used as the only means of objecting to the parents’ decision to up-root them. • Approach the subject with parents (gently) and involve the child in expressing their feelings (if language is a barrier, you may try some pictorial representations of emotions and feelings
<p>Reluctance to use adult support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to build a rapport with the child; you may do some work with the rest of the class to raise awareness of what it is like to operate in a different language. • Allow time for the child to accommodate to your class before you start suggesting changes
<p>Difficulty making new friends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is common again, but, the sooner you can support them make a new friend, the easier their integration will be (try training some of their peers as “Buddies” • However hard it may be, unfortunately, all you can do is create the opportunities for them to interact with peers, in the hope they will forge positive relationships • Ask the child how they feel about their situation (they may actually like being on their own).
<p>Reluctance to join in class discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they don’t speak during lessons, the classroom teacher could find it difficult to gauge how to best support the child; ideally, you would need to find ways to encourage the child interact • You may want to try a gradual approach: small groups first and then whole-class.
<p>The child doesn’t appear to be making (sufficient) progress in the first 3 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is common for children to take longer to get to grips with the basics of the language, but then leap to making considerable progress after some time: you may not see much progress in terms of the child being able to put sentences together for as long as 6 months, but then, they suddenly seem to be able to communicate (although not grammatically correct). • The child’s age and their previous experience are decisive factors here as well. • Careful observation will also help you identify any potential Special Educational Needs (you may ask your SENCo to help with this), although shyness and the language barrier may be misread as SEN.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get specialist help if in doubt - a discussion may be enough: consider: Hearing and vision checks, Learning Support Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Educational Psychology Service, etc.
<p>The child is showing signs of significant emotional distress e.g. withdrawn and sad; agitation and restlessness; anxious or obsessive behaviours; or violent and aggressive behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any new arrival such distress may be related to the current stresses in a child's life as the child and family adjust to a new culture, financial hardship, loss of status or absence of community and family. • If the child is a refugee or an asylum seeker they or their parents may have experienced traumatic events in their home country which continue to affect them. • It is worth asking parents if the child is troubled by sounds or pictures of things that have happened to them. • See your SENCo and then consider talking through the case with your Educational Psychologist. • If concerns suggest significant threats to a child's wellbeing such as repeated self-harm/ violent behaviour discuss the case with your line manager and decide further steps to engage specialist services
<p>The child is presenting with significant/severe/ complex learning difficulties and/or sensory needs which are recognisable within the child's language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Arrivals may on occasion have severe or complex learning difficulties which might trigger immediate support from external services (check with your SENCo). • These may have been identified through assessments in their home country, although sometimes paperwork may not be available. It is important that the SENCo / EAL coordinator refers to the appropriate services e.g. Hearing Impaired/ Visually Impaired Service and ensure appropriate health services are involved e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy. It may be appropriate to refer to the Educational Psychology Service. • Again it is important to consider what the child's experiences of education have been in their own country (whether they have been to school or attended a special school). • A request for statutory assessment may be appropriate in the rare cases where a child's needs are severe and complex enough to suggest that they cannot be met in mainstream school or where a special school is requested by parents.

4. Teaching Strategies

- Classroom activities have clear learning objectives and use appropriate materials and support to enable pupils to participate in lessons. For example, provide key words and phrases at the beginning of a new topic and pre-teach these if possible.
- Key language features of each curriculum area, e.g. key vocabulary, uses of language, forms of text, are identified.
- Enhanced opportunities are provided for speaking and listening, including both process and presentational talk, and use made of drama techniques and role play.
- Provide opportunities for oral rehearsal and repetition.
- Plan small group activities where talk and interaction are central to the learning going on. The newly arrived pupil may take a passive role to begin with but he/she will be hearing patterns of English and learning while listening
- Give pupils access to effective staff and peer models of spoken language.
- Additional visual support is provided, e.g. objects, labelled pictures, picture dictionaries, DVDs, ICT, posters, pictures, photographs, objects, demonstration, use of gesture.
- Additional verbal support is provided, e.g. repetition, modelling, peer support.
- Where possible, learning progression moves from the concrete to the abstract.
- Discussion is provided before, during and after reading and writing activities.

- Scaffolding is provided for language and learning, e.g. talk frames, writing frames, highlighting key words and phrases in a text.
- Don't worry if at first the child joins in an activity that you think he/she does not understand. As a newly arrived pupil, it is more important that the child is included and feels part of what is going on.
- Give the child opportunities to practise what they have learned e.g. by explaining to an adult or another child, playing a related game, taking work home to share with their family.
- Make books using magazine pictures, clipart or Google picture gallery, or use a digital camera to photograph things in school. The pupils could make books about themselves, the class, a week in school, a topic etc. Images could be labelled with single words and then extended to simple phrases and sentences. Such books can also be shared with parents.
- Give the child a way of responding alongside others e.g. by pointing, matching, repeating, labelling etc
- Differentiate tasks so that the child is able to succeed e.g. annotate drawings, sequence pictures, match sentence halves, fill in tables and grids, give yes/no or true/false responses.
- Use CDs or MP3s for listening activities and to accompany books and texts with spoken language.
- Parents may be able to support homework tasks e.g. learning vocabulary, matching texts to pictures, supporting reading and sharing dual language texts.

5. Inclusion

The school utilises a strategy of inclusion, and the positive and effective use of language. The strategy includes the following principles:

- There is an understanding throughout the school, for both staff and pupils, that a limited knowledge of English does not reflect a lack of ability or knowledge. Appreciating a pupil's ability to speak their own first language is essential for building their confidence and self-esteem.
- The language development of pupils is the responsibility of the entire school community.
- Diversity will be valued and classrooms will be socially inclusive.
- Teachers will be knowledgeable about pupils' abilities in English and use their knowledge to inform lesson planning.

6. Initial Assessments

The school will undertake a timely initial assessment to gauge pupils' English abilities in an informal manner that does not make the pupil feel isolated or inferior. The assessment will be carried out using **The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework** in [Appendix 1](#) and tracked closely through **The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Tracker**.

- Initial assessments are carried out by the class teacher and completed assessments are held on the pupil's profile.
- Following initial assessments, termly assessments will then take place, with ongoing assessment for learning taking place regularly.
- Children will be assessed across **5 assessment bands ranging from A to E:**

Assessment bands



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- Following the assessment, targets will be set within four key areas – listening, speaking, reading and viewing, and writing. Based on the targets that are set, strategies will be implemented across key areas such as classroom organisation, ongoing adaptations, language focus, marking/feedback and communication with home.
- The pupil and the parents of the pupil may view the assessment at any time.

7. Working with parents and carers

Liaison with parents is vital to the creation of a strong home/school partnership, which can ensure the development of pupils with EAL. To aid this partnership, the school will:

- Actively seek to put parents at ease by providing a welcoming environment conducive to productive discussions.
- Ensure the language used in letters to parents is clear and straightforward.
- Where appropriate, have teachers read through the letter with children before sending the letter home, to ensure the message is clear.
- Where necessary, ensure translations of school documents are carried out and provided to parents of pupils with EAL.
- Encourage parents to attend parents' evenings and participate in school functions.
- Invite parents to school to help with class activities, such as cooking, reading and class outings, where appropriate.
- Encourage parents to become involved with homework through shared reading schemes and language-based homework.

8. Special educational needs (SEN)

- A child is not regarded to have SEN solely because their home language is different from the language in which they are taught at school.
- A proportion of pupils with EAL may have one or more types of SEN and it is imperative that this is identified at an early stage.
- Assessments of SEN of pupils with EAL will involve EAL specialists along with SEN specialists.
- Where appropriate, the school will arrange an assessment in the child's first language.
- SEN support will be decided on an individual basis in the manner outlined within the school's SEND Policy.
- The school will ensure that the parents or carers of a pupil with SEN are not prevented from presenting their views throughout the process and are clearly informed at every stage.

9. Policy Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher.
- The scheduled review date for this policy is March 2027.