



Liverpool College

UPPER SCHOOL

POLICY A2

**ENGLISH AS AN
ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

Aims and Principles

At Liverpool College every student is important, and this applies to all aspects of their education – their teaching and learning, their achievements, their attitudes and their well-being. We encourage all our students to aim for the highest possible standards, and we take account of everyone's individual needs and experiences.

A number of our students have particular requirements with regard to learning and assessment, and these are linked to their progress in learning English as an Additional Language.

Students who are learning English as an additional language have linguistic skills similar to those of monolingual English-speaking children. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may well be in advance of their current ability to communicate in English.

Being a speaker of more than one language is no disadvantage to educational achievement; indeed, multilingualism is associated with success. This school recognises the importance of community languages in their own right, and the ability of their speakers to acquire other languages.

Teaching and learning style

Teachers use various methods to help children who are learning English as an Additional Language:

- ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meanings
- covering not just key words, but also metaphors and idioms
- explaining how spoken and written English have different usages for different purposes
- providing them with a range of reading materials, to exemplify the different ways in which English is used
- giving them appropriate opportunities for talking, and using talking to support writing
- encouraging them to relate one language to another
- using texts and materials that suit their ages and learning stages
- providing support through ICT, video and audio materials, dictionaries and translators, readers and amanuenses

Teachers are provided with guidance on supporting EAL students (Appendix).

EAL Lessons

Pupils may be withdrawn from lessons to receive EAL support. The language support teacher works in partnership with the Curriculum Support Manager. This involves supporting individual children or small groups of children and, at times, performing assessments to monitor progress.

The lessons help pupils to learn English as an additional language by:

- building on their experience of acquiring language at home and in the wider community, so that this experience supports their developing use of English
- providing a range of opportunities for them to engage in English speaking and listening activities
- providing support to extend vocabulary
- providing opportunities for children to hear English in a variety of contexts
- providing a variety of writing in English

SPD

January 2012

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Supporting EAL pupils in the Mainstream: some basic guidelines for teachers

Introduction

EAL means a pupil has English as an Additional Language (in addition to their first language) Increasingly at Liverpool College there are pupils who have English as their 'additional language.' Such pupils may range from complete beginners in English to pupils who have an upper-intermediate/advanced level. They will, of course, be getting help from the EAL teacher/s to make sure they learn English as quickly as possible. However, they will spend the majority of time in your classroom. Therefore, **all teachers are EAL teachers** to a large extent.

Whether you are dealing with beginners or pupils with an intermediate level of English, it is always important to take **all** the EAL pupils in your class into account when you are preparing and delivering your lessons. This brief guide is aimed at giving some hints on how to cater for EAL pupils in your classroom.

i. General Guidelines

It is important from the start to create a 'risk-taking' environment in your classroom where pupils don't fear ridicule and feel comfortable about 'having a go'. Raise the awareness of English speakers in the class, so that they can understand the difficulties faced by EAL pupils and are sympathetic and supportive to their situation. Within the classroom there should be as much exposure to English as possible.

Children who arrive at the school with no English at all or only a very elementary level of English might be very defensive about their lack of understanding and can get very frustrated at times. Try to be understanding of their feelings. Learning a language intensively can also be physically and mentally exhausting. You need to take this into account when setting work, especially towards the end of term. Do not judge a pupil's English language level by their level of oral fluency alone. This may be superficial and be used to hide a genuine lack of understanding.

Be very aware of pupils who come to Liverpool with a very different cultural and educational experience. For example, in some parts of Africa, East Asia and India, pupils will have been used to sitting behind desks in very large classrooms (sometimes more than 50!) copying and regurgitating. Some pupils may never have been asked to offer their ideas or opinions before. Therefore, not only are some of our pupils having to learn English, but also adapt to a very different learning environment too.

Bearing this in mind, you need to be careful when introducing new topics. Some topics may be completely unfamiliar to some children and we cannot take prior knowledge for granted (For example, seasons, climate, vegetation and farm animals). Also, you must place value on the home culture. Children can come to Liverpool College with an enormous amount of knowledge and diverse experiences and you should capitalise on this.

II. The Classroom

Your classroom should be welcoming, of course, and you might like to consider putting up displays of routines, basic instructions and lists of vocabulary central to your subject. Consider the actual physical arrangement of your classroom and think about the placement of pupils in advance. For example, in a science lesson where pupils are working together in groups, it is inevitable that a group made up of four Chinese pupils will speak Chinese to each other while they are conducting an experiment. This can hinder the progress they make in English and fails to give them practice of and exposure to the English they will need for your subject. A mixture of languages will encourage the pupils to use the school's main medium-English.

III. The Early Days

Settling in can be very difficult for the English Language Learner and they will need guidance and support at each moment of the day at the beginning of the school year. You may well find you have a pupil with only an elementary level of English in your class/tutor group. If this is the case...

- Use friendly positive body language
- Establish patterns and routines with which the pupils can become familiar quickly
- Consider providing the pupils with a guide in the form of someone responsible from the class
- Try to use the same vocabulary and phrases when referring to objects, activities and every day routines
- A wall display to help with basic needs can be very useful, especially for younger children. For example, a picture of a toilet that a small child can point to in an emergency! Other things might include: basic school vocabulary/items, some simple sentences to help EAL pupils express their needs (can I have a _____ please?/ How do you say _____ in English?/ Where's the _____? Etc)
- Put up a labelled plan of the areas of the school the pupils need to get to
- Organise your classroom well so that pupils know where to find things

IV. Teacher Talk

Pupils with even an upper-intermediate level of English may switch off if there are too many unfamiliar words being used by the teacher. Therefore,

- Repeat important/key phrases or, even better, write them on the board
- Emphasise key words when you are talking
- Don't just give out important notices/information/homework orally but get into the habit of writing them on the board too and giving pupils time to copy them down.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary and phrases when you introduce a new topic
- Write a glossary of key words and phrases that are central to each topic

However, always speak at a **normal** pace and with normal intonation. You do not need to shout at people (like Basil Fawlty talking to the Germans!) in order to make people understand you. Neither do you need to speak too slowly. It is important that pupils get used to the sound of your **normal** speaking voice quickly.

V. Correcting English

a. correcting spoken English

- Praise efforts to communicate and encourage but do not force EAL pupils' participation
- Rephrase for correction (although not all the time as this can be discouraging)

For example:

Pupil: *Yesterday I go to the park.*

Teacher: *You went to the park yesterday? How lovely!*

b. correcting written English

It is worth reminding you again that here at Liverpool College **all teachers are EAL teachers**. We all have a responsibility for the development of our pupils' English language skills in all their school subjects and it is not just the role of the EAL/English Departments to carry pupils' English forward. Helping your pupils improve their English will also help them improve in your subject.

Bearing this in mind, it is important that when correcting written work, subject teachers correct the language as well as the content. This does not mean, however, that you need to correct every single mistake. Put a limit of about 10 corrections for a piece of work and focus on basic errors and the correction of language that is central to the topic you are covering.

Instead of just putting a line under the mistake or crossing it out, it is more constructive to tell pupils what kind of language mistake they have made. You might even feel that some of the mistakes they should be able to correct themselves if they put their mind to it.

When drawing pupils' attention to the kind of mistake they are making, you may find using the following symbols useful:

WW	Wrong word
T	Tense (using the present tense to talk about the past, for example)
P	Punctuation
SP	Spelling
PR	Preposition (in, at, on, to etc)
GR	Grammar (any general grammar mistake)
V	Verb form (I have did my homework instead of I have done)

VI. **Beyond the Early Stages**

The rate of learning varies from individual to individual. Some pupils who are learning a new language go through a very lengthy silent period (sometimes as long as a year!). Alternatively, there may be a lot of progress orally in the initial stages before a pupil becomes tired and reaches a kind of 'plateau.' Reasons for an interruption in the language development may include fatigue or the need to simply consolidate before continuing to push forward.

Bear these different rates of learning in mind and take a patient view over minor behavioural problems as frustration can sometimes lead to disruptive behaviour. If you have any concerns, however, please refer to EAL or speak to the child's class teacher/tutor.

VII. **Younger Children**

- You should work closely with the teacher responsible for the EAL pupils in your class. Classroom teachers and English language learners alike will benefit if they include the EAL teacher in their general planning
- Build up children's vocabulary in an unforced way through exploring topics and themes and always give new words in context
- Use music and rhyme in your classroom. They are good for speech patterns and intonation
- Make your lessons highly visual to help EAL pupils understand the context

VIII: **Older Children**

- Announce the aims of the lesson clearly or write them on the board
- List instructions step by step
- Check understanding before moving onto the next point
- Give important instructions in writing as well as verbally
- Check understanding by asking questions, reviewing and asking pupils to fill in gaps
- Teach study skills explicitly
- Teach pupils to write for different purposes and never assume they know how to write a report/newspaper article/debate etc.

VIII. **EAL Pupils and Reporting/Parent Teacher Evenings**

It is very important, even in the early stages of a pupil's language learning to be encouraging but, above all, to be **honest and realistic**. Some parents can have very unrealistic expectations of the rate at which their children are going to acquire English. They might expect their child to be fluent in a year. Be honest with them and emphasise the point that, although their child has made terrific progress, s/he will continue to need EAL support for a long time yet.

IX. EAL Pupils and Assessment

As far as possible, you should always try to assess the EAL pupils' understanding of your subject and not just their English. Consider giving modified tests and base your assessment on a variety of things. For example, informal observations, oral tests, closed and open cloze texts, labelling diagrams, sorting and ordering illustrations etc. You may consider giving EAL pupils a glossary of the more difficult items of vocabulary in the test or allowing them to use a simple translating dictionary, as they can do during IB/A level examinations.

X. EAL/SEN

It is worth reminding teachers here that EAL and SEN are not the same! There may be a very small number of our pupils who are learning English as an additional language and who have also been diagnosed as having a specific learning difficulty by the SEN Department. Where this is the case, you are recommended to refer to the SEN record on SIMS for specific information and guidelines. This is just a small minority of the EAL pupils, however. EAL pupils can and should access the same curriculum areas as proficient English speakers given the right level of support and reflect the normal academic range at the school.

HEL 2012