



BLENHEIM
SCHOOLS

English as an additional language policy

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Effective Date: 01 September 2025

Review Cycle: Annually

Responsible Persons: Deputy Head Inclusion and All Staff

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how we support pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) to thrive both academically and socially. Our aim is to ensure that every child has access to high-quality teaching, appropriate support, and meaningful opportunities to learn English while continuing to value and build upon their first language and cultural heritage.

We believe that a rich and supportive school environment, underpinned by inclusive practices, helps children with EAL to gain confidence, develop fluency in English, and succeed across the full curriculum.

2. Definition

At our school, the term *English as an Additional Language* (EAL) refers to pupils who are exposed to or use a language other than English at home or in their community. This broad definition includes children at every stage of bilingualism, from those newly arrived with little or no English to those who are developing fluency but continue to use another language at home.

We acknowledge that pupils' experiences of language and education before joining our school will vary widely. Some may already have a high level of English fluency, while others may be encountering English for the first time. We also recognise the importance of maintaining and valuing each pupil's first language. Continued use of the home language supports a child's sense of identity, strengthens family relationships, and contributes positively to their overall cognitive and linguistic development.

Partnership with parents is central to this process. Parents are encouraged to continue speaking and reading in their first language, as this provides a strong foundation for further language acquisition.



3. Statement of Intent

We are committed to ensuring that:

- Pupils are **not identified as having a learning difficulty** solely on the basis that their home language is not English.
- Additional support for English language development is provided where appropriate, tailored to the needs of individual pupils.
- Older pupils with very limited English may be recommended to undertake a short, focused programme of intensive tuition before starting school, to support their transition.
- All pupils, regardless of their language background, are given **equal access to a broad, balanced, and stimulating curriculum**.
- Pupils are encouraged to use and celebrate their first languages, recognising their role in shaping personal identity and enriching the school community.
- The school actively promotes **equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice**, celebrating differences and addressing individual needs in line with our Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policy.

4. Aims and Objectives

Our policy aims to:

- Welcome and respect the cultural, linguistic, and personal experiences of every child with EAL.
- Protect and build upon each child's self-esteem by acknowledging and celebrating their cultural identity and home language.
- Ensure that effective strategies are in place to help pupils with EAL access the full curriculum.
- Support pupils in developing the confidence and fluency to communicate effectively in English.

To support these aims, staff will:

- Collect and share information about each child's background, including languages spoken, religion, cultural customs, and any personal needs.
- Communicate openly with parents, emphasising that the school values and celebrates the wide range of languages and cultures represented in our community.



- Establish clear and consistent routines, reinforced with visual aids, repetition, and one-to-one explanations as needed.
- Use a variety of strategies to aid understanding and learning, including visual prompts, gestures, pictures, and objects.
- Respond positively to all attempts at communication, recognising that children often understand more than they can yet express.
- Model appropriate, correct use of English in interactions, ensuring repetition and positive reinforcement are used consistently.
- Identify opportunities to teach and reinforce essential vocabulary and sentence structures, embedding these across lessons and activities.
- Plan for children with EAL to participate regularly in small-group activities, where they can interact meaningfully with peers and develop communication skills in a supportive environment.
- Understand and support children who may go through a “silent period” before speaking English, or who may feel reluctant to use their home language in school. During this time, staff will model language through commentary and supportive talk.
- Make use of bilingual staff, where available, to ease communication and help pupils manage linguistic challenges.
- Recognise and value non-verbal responses as meaningful communication, extending them into fuller English sentences when appropriate.

5. Implementation in Practice

We ensure that support for EAL pupils is practical, consistent, and tailored to their needs. This includes:

- Collecting detailed information during admission
- Monitoring each pupil’s progress closely, adapting provision and support where necessary in partnership with parents. Reports are issued at the end of each term
- Encouraging peer-to-peer interaction as a powerful means of learning. Where possible, new pupils are paired with a “buddy” or mentor to help them settle in, and families are always encouraged to arrange informal meet-ups



6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Deputy Head, Inclusion:** Ensure this policy is implemented effectively, monitor its impact, and review it regularly.
- **Staff Team:** Apply strategies consistently, monitor and record progress, and provide feedback to SLT and parents.
- **Parents and Carers:** Work in partnership with the school, supporting their child's learning at home while maintaining and valuing their home language.

