

# St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road Kidlington OX5 1EA



Headteacher: Mrs Julieann Exley

## **English as an Additional Language (EAL) – St Thomas More Catholic School** **Policy**

### **Rationale**

All pupils need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn effectively and become successful members of society. For pupils, who are learning English as an additional language, this includes recognising and valuing their home language and background.

As a school, we are aware that bilingualism can be a useful learning tool and that all EAL pupils can make a valuable contribution to their school community. We take a whole school approach, including ethos, curriculum and education against racism. At St Thomas More Catholic School we celebrate the fact that some of our children speak more than one language and we acknowledge their ability to use a variety of community languages.

In our school the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all children are important. We encourage all children to achieve the highest possible standards, considering each child's life experiences and needs.

### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to help ensure that we meet the full range of needs of those children who are learning English as an additional language. This is in line with the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001.

The policy aims to raise awareness and to support planning, organisation, teaching and assessment procedures, and the use of resources and strategies to meet the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL).

### **As a school we will work together to:**

- Provide our EAL pupils with a safe, welcoming, nurturing environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate
- Ensure access to the curriculum through high quality teaching
- Help children to speak, understand, read and write English

- Support the continued use of children's home languages
- Assess and monitor learning which informs teaching
- Be proactive in removing barriers that stand in the way of our EAL learners fulfilling their potential
- Make sure EAL learners are not inappropriately labelled or grouped as SEN or low ability
- Acknowledge individual strengths and celebrate cultural identities
- Provide an environment which celebrates diversity and supports English language learning
- Work with parents of EAL learners and ensure language is not a barrier to effective partnership
- Provide EAL learners – particularly those who are International New Arrivals - with a safe and welcoming environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate
- Create partnerships beyond the school to improve provision and support for our EAL learners
- Be proactive in removing barriers that stand in the way of our EAL pupils' learning and success
- Meet our responsibilities to EAL pupils by ensuring equal access to the National Curriculum and the achievement of their educational potential.

### **Objectives of the EAL Policy**

- To assist all EAL pupils to become fluent English speakers as quickly as possible
- To develop staff expertise to ensure that all EAL pupils attain levels of achievement appropriate to their intellectual abilities
- To develop rigorous monitoring, evaluating and review systems

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School teachers act to help children who are learning English as an additional language by various means:

1. Developing their spoken and written English by:
  - ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meaning of key words, metaphors and idioms
  - providing a range of reading materials that highlight the different ways in which English is used
  - ensuring that there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing
  - encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another
  - building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing uses of English and other languages support one another
2. Ensuring access to the curriculum and to assessment by:
  - using accessible texts and materials that suit children's ages and levels of learning
  - providing support through ICT, video or audio materials, dictionaries and translators, readers and other means
  - using the home or first language where appropriate
  - setting small step targets in literacy for EAL pupils

### **School context**

In our school, on entry to the school, information is gathered about:

- Pupils' linguistic background and competence in other language/s
- Pupils' previous educational experience
- Pupils' family and biographical background

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## **Key Principles of additional language acquisition**

EAL pupils are entitled to the full National Curriculum programme of study and all their teachers have a responsibility for teaching English as well as other subject content.

Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understanding cannot be assumed, but must be made explicit. Language is central to our identity. Therefore, the home language of all pupils and staff should be recognised and valued. Pupils should be encouraged to maintain their home language. Although many pupils 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. Language develops best when used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum. The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and included in planning.

Teaching and support staff play a crucial role in modelling uses of language. Knowledge and skills developed in learning the first language aid the acquisition of additional languages. A clear distinction should be made between EAL and Special Educational Needs.

## **Guidelines**

- We promote academic achievement by grouping EAL pupils according to cognitive level rather than English language level
- We identify language outcomes for all curriculum areas and include in medium-term and weekly planning
- We promote and encourage the development of the children's first languages in order to facilitate concept development in tandem with their acquisition of English
- We provide pupils with access to resources which are age appropriate, at an appropriate language level, and are linguistically and culturally appropriate
- We use key visuals and other strategies to support children's access to the curriculum

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- We actively liaise with parents to help them to support their children's learning
- We facilitate parents' access to school life by providing bilingual support especially for parents' evenings and school events.
- We ensure that EAL pupils are assessed in their first language where possible and where appropriate
- We seek first language assessment to ensure the accurate identification of SEN
- We provide EAL support in small groups and one to one when necessary to develop the children's English Language skills.

### **Our 5 Stage Model for Language Acquisition**

#### 1. New to English (Beginners)

A child may:

- Use first language for learning and other purposes
- Remain silent in the classroom
- Copy/repeat some words and phrases
- Understand some everyday English expressions but have minimal or no English literacy

#### 2. Early Acquisition (Beginners to intermediate)

A child may:

- Follow day-to-day social communication in English
- Begin to use spoken English for social purposes
- Understand simple instructions and follow narrative/accounts with visual support
- Develop some skills in reading and writing
- Become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary

**A child at this stage needs significant support**

#### 3. Developing Competence (Intermediate)

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A child may:

- Participate in learning activities with increasing independence
- Express themselves orally in English but structural inaccuracies are still apparent
- Require ongoing support in literacy, particularly for understanding text and writing
- Follow abstract concepts and more complex written English

**A child at this stage requires support to access the curriculum fully**

#### 4. Competent (Advanced)

A child may:

- Develop oral English well, allowing successful engagement in activities across the curriculum
- Read and understand a wide variety of text
- Written English may lack complexity
- Demonstrate evidence of errors in grammatical structure

**A child at this stage needs support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary**

#### 5. Fluent

A child at this stage can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language.

### **Curriculum Access**

All children at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School follow the curricular requirements of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. Children with English as an additional language do not produce separate work, unless within a focused target intervention group. When children are withdrawn from lessons for EAL support we ensure that this is not at the same time every week.

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In the Foundation Stage we plan opportunities for children to develop their English, and we provide support to help them take part in activities. The Foundation Stage helps children learning English as an additional language by:

- building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing uses of English and of other languages support one another
- providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults
- providing bilingual support to extend vocabulary

### **Assessment**

We use the code set steps as recommended by Department for Education, to measure English language competence for New to English children. These children are targeted on a termly basis. Pupils who are new to our school are assessed after the first three weeks of their arrival and monitored during and after intervention work. We carry out ongoing recording of attainment and progress in line with agreed school procedures for EAL children not New to English, monitoring the progress made at least termly, then highlighting children in need of targeting for focus support. The statutory assessment arrangements of the National Curriculum allow us to make special arrangements for children who are learning English as an additional language.

For the science and written mathematics test at Key Stage 2, we can provide verbal translations for children in their first year in the English school system. For the mental arithmetic test at Key Stage 2 we can provide a verbal translation of the test to children who have limited English, and who joined the school after 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year preceding the tests

### **Teaching Strategies and Pedagogical Approaches**

The curriculum is personalised and this helps the children use their prior knowledge and experience. The speaking and listening is always the starting point of a new

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topic or activity and writing is always the last step, giving EAL pupils extra time to speak before they write.

The grammatical rules and the sentence structures are taught within the context of the different topics and genres. Visual resources are used to aid their learning

The teaching at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is based on the Early Years outcomes and the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2.

The central task is to create a communicative climate where language acquisition can take place naturally. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are not artificially separated, but are integrated in a meaningful total experience. Pupils with EAL are encouraged to communicate through paired work and group work and this way they improve their listening as well. EAL children are paired with fluent English-speaking pupils as much as possible to provide them with good models of English. Through speaking exercises such as interviews, storytelling and drama, the children gain verbal routine, enthusiasm and confidence. The key vocabulary is taught at the beginning of a new topic and the children learn and practise grammatical structures and sentence building using the topic vocabulary.

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access:

- Collaborative group work
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing
- Additional verbal support-repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support
- Additional visual support, e.g. posters, objects, non-verbal clues, pictures, demonstration, use of gesture, etc.
- Bilingual resources, e.g. dictionaries, on-line support, bilingual staff/pupils, texts, key word lists
- Writing frames, directed activities related to texts
- Opportunities for role play
- Regular feedback from staff
- Opportunities to focus on the cultural knowledge explicit or implicit in texts

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- Discussion provided before and during reading and writing activities, using preferred language where appropriate
- Learning progression moves from concrete to abstract

Further support for pupils' language development is provided outside the formal curriculum, e.g. in assemblies, school clubs, breakfast and afterschool clubs, etc.

Differentiated planning is put into place to support the EAL children in their Literacy and Maths groups. In Literacy the children work on the same topic and unit, but the tasks are either extended or simplified to meet their special needs. In Maths the planning is differentiated according to the children's previous education and knowledge and targets are being set to fill the gaps in their knowledge.

**Beginners:** Classroom Support Staff take groups of EAL children/individuals for Letters and Sounds, spelling/reading of high frequency words and reading. The children are also taught basic nouns and phrases that they will need in the classroom.

**Intermediates:** The EAL Lead Teacher further develops the vocabulary and demonstrates to the children how to speak in simple sentences. Pupils are also taught Phonics skills to enable the children to record their work.

**Advanced:** Support continues in the classroom by differentiated planning, EAL support and individual set activities according to pupils' needs.

### **EAL pupils with Disabilities and/or, Special Educational Needs and those who are More Able and/or Talented**

We recognise that intelligence is not measured in the ability to speak English fluently. Should Special Educational Needs be identified, EAL pupils have equal access to school's SEND provision. EAL pupils identified as More Able have equal access to school's provision. We encourage all children to access our school clubs in order to improve their language skills through play and entertainment.

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## **Parental/Community Involvement**

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we encourage parental and community involvement by:

- Making everyone feel welcome from the first point of contact.
- Use translators and interpreters, where appropriate and available, to ensure good links are made between the Family and the school
- Identify linguistic, cultural and religious background of pupils and establish contact with the wider Community
- Recognise and encourage the use of first language for developing positive links between school and home
- Invite parents for coffee mornings/afternoons to establish a positive relationship between the school and the local community
- Organise phonics and reading sessions with parents to raise awareness of the importance of every day reading at home with an adult
- Send videos of phonics lessons to parents

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

There is a collective responsibility, held by all staff, to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of our EAL pupils' achievement and inclusion. The designated Inclusion Officer and EAL Support Worker oversee the development and day-to-day coordination of EAL provision.

The EAL Support Worker will:

- Understand what constitutes excellent EAL provision and provide advice on EAL teaching alongside the Headteacher and SENCO.
- Keep abreast of educational guidance and EAL issues
- Manage the induction of EAL learners and monitor EAL arrivals and leavers (some induction roles may be delegated)
- Monitor support required for teaching, learning and assessment
- Collect and analyse EAL data and advise on EAL development priorities
- Manage EAL resources

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- Promote a school environment that celebrates diversity
- Promote positive relationships with parents of EAL learners
- Liaise with and support the school leadership team on matters relating to EAL

Reviewed: October 2023

Reviewer: Julieann Exley, Headteacher

Next Review due: October 2024