

The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great

Believe and Achieve



English as an Additional Language Policy

To be reviewed by January 2026

To be read with the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)

Mission Statement

Believe and Achieve

“We are a safe and happy school where we all shine as part of God’s family.”

The Mission Statement of our school talks of valuing the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. This policy helps to ensure that this happens for every child in our school who is using English as an Additional Language by setting out the aims, principles, strategies and practices with regard to meeting their needs, celebrating their skills and helping them achieve the highest possible standards.

Introduction

The term EAL is used when referring to the provision for pupils who use / have used a language other than English at home. In England, such learners are defined as those who have been ‘*exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English*’ (Department for Education, 2022). These pupils, sometimes referred to as multilingual learners, belong to a diverse and heterogeneous group who speak English as an Additional Language. They include children with a wide range of English proficiency, from new to English, to competent or fluent users of EAL, many of whom are learning the language of instruction at the same time they are learning rigorous academic content. The last decade has seen a steady rise in the numbers of multilingual learners at our school, and at the time of publication, they represent 57% of our pupil population. At The Catholic School of St Gregory the Great, we recognise and celebrate the fact that many of our children speak more than one language and at the time of publication there were more than 30 languages in addition to English spoken in our school. These include among others, Polish, Malayalam, Portuguese, Tagalog/Filipino, Italian, Spanish, French, Romanian, Hungarian, Chinese Konkani and Mandarin. All pupils need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn, and for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, this includes recognising and valuing their home language and culture. We are aware as a school that bilingualism is a strength and that EAL pupils and their families have a valuable contribution to make, enriching our school community.

Aims

The National Curriculum secures entitlement for all children to access certain areas of learning, and gives them the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfilment and development as responsible citizens. The aim of this policy is to ensure that our provision fulfils this entitlement and meets the aims of our own mission statement for those children who are learning English as an additional language.

We aim to implement appropriate and well researched strategies to ensure that EAL pupils are well supported in accessing the full curriculum.

We endeavour to help EAL pupils to become confident, resilient learners, fluent in speaking and listening, reading and writing in English in order to be able to fulfil their potential.

We recognise that EAL pupils are a diverse group with a range of cultural, linguistic, cognitive and educational backgrounds, as well as other life experiences, all of which give rise to differing needs. We therefore endeavour to provide personalised assessment, learning and pastoral support appropriate for each child.

We aim to encourage and enable parental support in improving children's language skills and access to the curriculum.

Principles

Our children with EAL are entitled to the full National Curriculum programme of study and to opportunities for educational success that are equal to those of our English speaking children.

Children with EAL have linguistic skills similar to those of monolingual English-speaking children and we recognise that their ability to participate in the full curriculum may well be in advance of their current ability to communicate in English. Cognitive challenge should therefore be kept appropriately high.

Language acquisition goes hand in hand with cognitive and academic development.

Well planned mainstream lessons provide the best environment for acquisition of English for children with EAL.

Although many multilingual learners acquire the ability to communicate on a day to day basis in English fairly quickly (1-2 years), becoming fully competent in the use of curriculum / academic English is a long process (5-7 years), therefore pupils using EAL potentially require long term support.

Bilingualism is an asset.

The linguistic and ethnic diversity of our children strengthens and enriches our school and community.

All languages, dialects, accents and cultures are equally valued.

Strategies

Our school has an EAL team staffed with experienced practitioners who work closely with the class teachers. Together, they carefully plan support for our multilingual learners based on their needs and around the curriculum and topics specific to that year group. Progress is monitored continually.

The school is a member of NALDIC (UK subject association for English as an additional language) so that we keep informed of up to date news, research and best practice. We also employ a range of bilingual teaching partners throughout the school.

We have a process for new arrivals which involves collecting and sharing background information, warmly welcoming new pupils to help them feel safe and part of their class and school community, and once settled, a detailed educational assessment in speaking, listening, reading, writing and maths. For assessing proficiency in English, we use the Bell Foundation's award winning EAL Assessment Framework which is underpinned by robust academic research and expertise. The Framework enables staff to generate targets to guide progress.

Based on this initial assessment, the EAL team and class teacher plan an individualised support program for each child. Formal reviews of progress and support requirements take place twice yearly with the class teacher and informally on an ongoing basis. Parent meetings (in addition to the regular school parent – teacher meetings) are offered by the EAL team for all supported pupils at the end of each academic year. Through our continual cycle of assessment, target setting and tailored support, English language skills can be improved to enable the learner to fully access the curriculum and fulfil their academic potential.

We use a range of strategies and practices to help support EAL children and their families:

- Provision of additional support in the classroom during lessons.
- Differentiating work and making adaptations where necessary to engage and support.
- Setting appropriate expectations and targets; encouraging children to contribute.
- Recognising that EAL pupils may need more time to process answers.
- Scaffolding for language and learning, e.g. using talk frames, writing frames.
- Provision of effective opportunities for talking and using talking to support writing.
- Encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding from one language to another.
- Providing access to a range of reading materials that highlight different ways English is used.
- Providing access to effective staff and peer models of spoken English language.
- Providing additional visual support e.g. posters, pictures, photographs, objects, videos, demonstration.
- Providing additional verbal support, e.g. repetition, modelling, peer support.
- Using bilingual resources including dictionaries, online support, subject glossaries, key word lists, bilingual staff / pupils.
- Inclusion in some small groups out of class for support activities designed to expedite the acquisition of language skills and enable greater access to the curriculum - usually linked to the work of the mainstream class.
- Provision of homework support and other clubs.
- Provision of parent workshops for specific areas, e.g. Secondary School Transfer process, SATs support, homework support.
- Opportunities for families to participate in school events celebrating diversity, e.g. food fiestas, Multicultural Christmas Fairs.
- Valuing and celebrating home languages, providing opportunities for their use and communicating the benefits of bilingualism.
- Signposting parents to local English improvement classes / groups.
- Encouragement for families to maintain their home language.
- Use of translators and interpreters where available, to ensure good links between family and school.

Regular data analysis is carried out to monitor the progress and attainment of multilingual learners to assess the impact of the support they receive. Data for the last 4 years shows that the attainment and progress of our pupils using EAL has been at least in line with, and frequently above the EAL national averages. As a group, our EAL children make extremely good progress as they journey through the school, attaining at least as highly as their monolingual English speaking peers at the end of KS2 (Y6), indicating that the support they receive at The Catholic School of St Gregory the Great is very effective.

Statutory tests

Pupils new to the school within the test year may be disapplied from National testing schedules if they have insufficient access to the curriculum prior to testing or if their language needs mean that they will be unable to access the tests appropriately.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

EAL and SEND are very different needs that are independent of each other but may also co-exist. Should special educational needs or disabilities be identified, EAL pupils have equal access to the school's SEND provision.