

English as an Additional Language Policy (EAL) St. Fiacc's NS

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in June 2023 by John Brennan (Principal); Gillian Doyle (SENCO); Mary Kavanagh (EAL coordinator); Louise Gannon (EAL teacher); Siobhan Cody Gaule (Acting SENCO); Miss Fiona Payne (HSCL). It will be made available for review by staff and parents prior to ratification by the Board of Management.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is

- to provide guidelines to school staff on the delivery of English as an additional language.
- To facilitate the inclusion of all pupils in our school.
- To enable pupils whose primary language or language of the home is other than English, to reach their potential.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school.

St. Fiacc's strives to create and promote an inclusive environment that embraces and supports all members of our community.

Aims

- To provide a framework for supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for those students for whom English is an additional language.
- To improve EAL pupils' development of English language proficiency so that they can gradually gain access to the curriculum.
- To recognise and respect ethnic and cultural diversity at St Fiacc's thus ensuring that EAL pupils feel valued, affirmed and welcome.
- To promote effective home school links and increase parental involvement among parents of EAL pupils.
- To maximise the progress, academic attainment and personal achievement of EAL pupils.

Guidelines (Content of policy)

- Role of the language support teacher.
- Collaboration between the language support teachers and class teacher.
- Organisation of language support.
- Identification of pupils requiring language support.
- Assessment of language proficiency
- Programme planning.
- Recording and monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Communication with parents.
- Individual teachers' planning and reporting.

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1. Role of the language support teacher.

"In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress. They share their expertise with mainstream class teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency." Circular 0015/2009

The primary responsibility of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gradually gain access to the curriculum, ultimately achieving the same educational opportunities as English-speaking peers.

This is achieved by:

- Working in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each pupil.
- Preparing the pupil, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later more fully.
- Helping the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general.

The responsibility of the language support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is based exclusively on the primary curriculum (see the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks on pages 41–54) and which prepares and supports the child in:

- Accessing classroom learning.
- Socializing with peers.

The language support teacher, however, cannot teach the curriculum and this remains the role and responsibility of the mainstream teacher. Pupils spend the greater part of their time in the mainstream classroom and attend language support for a small proportion of specialized class time. The benefit of this time, which is focused on English language learning, can be maximized through liaison and a flow of information between the mainstream teacher and the language support teacher. (Up and Away p. 5)

The language support teacher is an invaluable resource for mediating activities to contribute to intercultural understanding. He or she gains many insights into the lives, traditions, beliefs and values of newcomer children through close contact in small language support groups.

The involvement of newcomer parents in school activities also contributes to the understanding of both similarity and difference. We will endeavour to encourage parents to participate in 'intercultural festivals', 'international days', and days which 'celebrate our school'. (Up and Away p.10). Parent focus group suggested a buddy system for EAL newcomers and that the teacher be conscious of the need to repeat instructions to N-EAL pupils.

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The principal objective of the language support programme is to integrate the pupil as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school. (Up and Away p.20)

In collaboration with parents / guardians and the mainstream class teacher, the language support teacher:

- Identifies pupils requiring additional language support.
- Requests written consent from parents / guardians to proceed with assessment. Support will be provided for parents / guardians with the completion of the consent form if this is deemed necessary.
- Assesses the pupils proficiency in English using the assessment tasks from the Up and Away programme.
- Provides support for the child both in class and in small groups.
- Devises an appropriate language programme.
- Delivers the programme.
- Records and monitors the pupil's progress.
- Assesses the pupil using the Primary School Assessment Kit (DES 2007).
- Encourages the involvement of newcomer parents in school activities.

2. Collaboration between the language support teacher and the class teacher.

Collaboration will be facilitated by the following:

- The language support teacher will assess proficiency in English using the assessment tasks from the Up and Away programme & Primary School Assessment Kit p.17
- Following assessment an appropriate language programme will be devised by the language support teacher with input from the class teacher - for example information regarding thematic planning in various subject areas.
- Regular meetings (including formal monthly meetings) will take place between the learning support teacher and the class teacher in order to:
 - Plan and evaluate pupil learning
 - Review/evaluate/assess pupil integration in mainstream class, for example, the classroom teacher may provide information about how the pupil is reacting in class and coping with interaction with peers.
 - Identify any area of concern regarding progress as an English Language learner.
- There are agreed checklists (School Support Checklist and My Thoughts about School) that will be used when observing the strengths and challenges faced by the pupil during the settling in period. (cf Up and Away pp. 4,6,22,23; Circular 0015/2009)

3. Organisation of Language Support in this school.

- Pupils are withdrawn from class. In-class support will be facilitated through Aistear in Junior Infants.
- EAL pupils are assessed regarding their level of proficiency in the English language.

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- The EAL teachers, in collaboration with the class teachers, arrange a timetable which will facilitate pupils' access to non-language based curriculum areas as far as possible.
- There is flexibility within the delivery of language support with varying models of support delivered to best meet the pupils' needs. Circular 07/2012 states, "Schools now have the autonomy on how to deploy resource between language support and learning support depending on their specific needs".

4. Identification of pupils requiring language support and assessment of the language proficiency of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

- The class teacher will make a formal and informal assessment of the newcomer child's English language capabilities and competencies. (cf Up and Away pp. 20-25 re initial interview, checklist for observing during the silent period, feedback forms to guide teachers.
- The EAL coordinator will liaise with the SENCO to formulate a draft list of candidates for EAL.
- When identified parents will be given a consent form by the EAL teacher authorising the school to carry out additional assessments and withdraw the child from the mainstream setting if appropriate, to access additional support in the English language.
- The HSCL and/or SENCO will meet with parent of EAL pupil to complete a data capture form.
- The EAL teacher will administer a selection of assessments from the Up and Away programme/Primary School Assessment Kit p.17 to ascertain the pupil's level of proficiency using the English language. Cf English as an Additional Language in Irish Primary Schools, NCCA Guidelines for teachers pp. 51-59). A school support file is opened in respect of pupils selected for EAL support.
- The language support programme is organised with reference to the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the 13 units of work based on the Primary Language Curriculum as referenced in Up and Away pp. 36-56.
- The Primary School Assessment Kit (Refer to Circular 0015/2009) is used to assess EAL pupils' language proficiency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The tests in the kit are based on IILT's English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and assess pupil progress through the 3 levels of A1 Waystage, A2 Breakthrough and B1 Threshold. When a pupil has achieved level B1 in all language skills i.e. the receptive language skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of spoken interaction, spoken production and writing (Up and Away p. 36), then he/she has achieved the minimum proficiency to access the curriculum in the mainstream classroom. All pupils in receipt of EAL are assessed with the kit at the end of the school year. The scores are added to the pupil's School Support File.
- Allocation of additional support for pupils who require language support for more than two years: The appeal steps as outlined in Circular 0015/2009 will be considered regarding applications to the Dept of Education and Science for additional teaching hours for pupils who have not reached level B1 in all the language skills.

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- The inclusion of EAL pupils in routine standardised testing in school is managed with reference to Circular 0138/2006, 'Pupils may be excluded from the test if in the view of the school Principal they have learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the test, or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate'. Any decision to exempt a pupil will be taken in consultation with parents/guardians. It is generally accepted that pupils who have not reached level A1.3 of the language proficiency benchmarks may not be tested with standardised tests
- The Education Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on principals and teachers to "regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents." Each EAL pupil's progress is monitored and assessed at appropriate intervals through completion of the Primary School Assessment kit
- Communication is facilitated with parents/guardians whose mother tongue is not English through the use of translation apps. Written communication with parents/guardians will be facilitated by the use of similar means, as needed. During Parent-Teacher meetings, teachers will use pictorial representations of pupil progress, as needed. Samples of pupil's work will be shown using Seesaw.

5. Programme Planning

- Language support programme is organised in relation to the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the 13 Units of Work based on the Primary Language Curriculum (Up & Away pp. 36-56).
- Language support is delivered in small groups of 3-5 pupils on a daily basis. Little and often is more effective than a longer session less frequently.
- Where appropriate, the timetable of language support is organised to include flexi periods which will focus exclusively on a particular problem area.
- Programmes of work are collaboratively devised through consultation between class teacher and EAL teacher during their regular meetings.
- Materials for language support will include; class books, activity books, storybooks, games, picture-photo dictionaries, sets of cards, phonic series, projects, computer software, et cetera. Teachers and pupils can access additional language resources through individual iPads or the Starlight Oral language programme
- Resources will be selected throughout the school to reflect diversity in culture, language and customs within the context of the school's Catholic ethos.
- The school celebrates an Intercultural Awareness Culture Day annually, which represents the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school community.
- The Programme can be summarised as:
 - Identifying EAL learners.
 - Aiding the 'settling down' period.
 - Collaboration between class teacher and EAL teacher.
 - Initial assessment (Up and Away programme/Primary School Assessment Kit p.17)
 - Devising a specific language programme for individual pupils/groups.
 - Delivering language programme.

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- End of year assessment/progress assessment (Primary School Assessment Kit)

6. Recording and Monitoring of Pupils' progress

With reference to Circular 0015/2009, all documentation in relation to the administration of tests is retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.

The EAL teacher will record and monitor progress through:

- Student Support Files uploaded to Aladdin.
- Cuntas Miosiuil.
- Teacher designed tasks and observations.
- Initial assessment (Up and away programme, Aistear programme and teacher designed tasks)
- Pupils' work samples
- Meeting with class teacher to discuss progress both in the language support class and in the mainstream class.
- End of year assessment/ progress assessment (Primary School Assessment Kit/School Support File Review sheet)

7. Individual teacher planning and reporting

There is an agreed template for the cuntas miosuil and agreed yearly plan for delivery of the Up and Away programme while also allowing for alternative/supplementary materials.

8. Success criteria

- Pupils gradually gain access to the curriculum by becoming more proficient in English as an additional language.
- Pupils are enabled to grow in confidence secure in their knowledge of the social norms of the school community, which is inclusive and intercultural.
- Pupils achieve level B1.3 in listening, speaking, reading and writing of the English language as per the Primary School Assessment Kit.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- The policy is coordinated by the SEN coordinator who will compile the list of pupils who will access language support in consultation with the Principal & EAL coordinator.
- The HSCL will meet with parents of EAL pupils to complete the data capture form and seek consent.
- The EAL teacher will assess the pupils on arrival in St. Fiacc's to ascertain their level of proficiency in English as an additional language.
- The AP2 will promote intercultural awareness and diversity in consultation with HSCL and SENCO termly.

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- The primary responsibility of the EAL teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that she can gradually gain access to the curriculum. This is achieved by:
- Working in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable targets
- Preparing the pupil to access mainstream learning
- Helping the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills for future, formal education
- It remains the role and responsibility of the mainstream class teacher to teach the curriculum.

10. Implementation date

This policy document was reviewed with a focus group of parents with the HSCL and EAL coordinator on 26/06/2023. It will be shared at a staff planning day in August 2023. It will be ratified by the BOM of St. Fiacc's in September 2023 and will be implemented thereafter.

11. Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed in the school year commencing September 2025. This future review will be coordinated by the SEN coordinator and Principal.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 27/09/23. It will be reviewed as the need arises.

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EAL: Themes

Sept	Oct	November	December	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Myself	Our School and Halloween	People who help us Weather	Colours Shapes and Opposites Christmas	New Year Clothes	Food	The local and wider community Caring for my locality Easter	Plants and animals	Time	Transport and Summer