English as an Additional Language Policy

Aspire Learning

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Contents

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1.Introduction

A number of our pupils and their families have English as an Additional Language (EAL). As is documented across all educational settings, the proportion of pupils and families with EAL continues to grow and the range of home languages spoken by our pupils, or their families, is increasingly diverse. This diversity is viewed positively by all at the school as an opportunity to open up pupils, staff and families to new cultural experiences and break down social barriers. We recognise the additional support needs that may exist for pupils and families with EAL and aim to address these proactively.

2. Aims

Our key principles are:

- All pupils are entitled to equal access to the curriculum.

- Forming and maintaining strong links with parents/carers is fundamental to our pupils' learning and development.

- Learning and using more than one language is an asset and opens up a learning opportunity for our pupils and staff.

- Promoting development in a pupil's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages.

3. Potential Barriers

There are potential difficulties when working with pupils with EAL in addition to their social, emotional and mental health difficulties and/or autism.

3.1 Distinguishing language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent disordered communication development.

Whether or not they have EAL, most pupils at the school experience some form of communication impairment, consistent with their individual learning needs. Accurate assessment of a pupil's receptive and expressive language skills must take into account EAL status and good practice guidelines.

3.2 Supporting pupils with complex communication needs and EAL to understand the language of the classroom and express their wants, needs, feelings and opinions.

Pupils who are EAL may have English language difficulties that impact on their ability to understand instructions, information, or conversation and to express themselves clearly to English speaking adults and peers. Some of our pupils have autism and related communication difficulties which may be compounded by learning EAL. Many of the methods used to develop communication skills across the whole school will support those pupils with EAL.

3.3 Families of children with additional needs may have come across outdated advice regarding stopping use of the home language.

All staff must reassure families that current guidance says families should provide the best language model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent.

3.4 Establishing strong links with families in spite of a language barriers.

A child is best supported when families and schoolwork together and the school is constantly striving to maintain, develop and strengthen our links with families. When working with families with EAL, existing language barriers must be addressed in order to optimise the pupil's progress.

4. Data gathering

As part of the entry procedure to the school, parents/guardians are asked to disclose their child's ethnicity, home language, first language and religion. This enables the school to support families and the pupil to the best means possible.

5. Respecting diversity

The school places huge value on a child developing as an individual according to their religious, cultural and personal beliefs and aims to work with children and their families to support this. The school can develop understanding of awareness their own and other pupils' linguistic and social cultures through a range of events including:

- Cultural days and theme weeks

- Culturally diverse assemblies/plays

- Trips to culturally related places in the community (e.g.: local temples, synagogues, mosques etc.).

- Working closely with parents of pupils to understand their perception of special needs in their culture.

- Displaying work completed by pupils on different languages and social cultures.

- Ensuring resources used in class activities reflect a range of ethnicities (e.g.: ensuring the library has a range of books in various languages)

6. Recruitment

The school employs staff irrespective of their home language and staff are not required to disclose their home language. All staff are interviewed prior to employment at which point it is ascertained whether their

proficiency in English is suitable for the post. A number of staff are using EAL and may be able to converse with a child/family in a different language if needed. They act as positive role models for children who may be self-conscious that English is not their first language.

7. Translation

Through links with the local communities and families we also have available information on recommended local contacts who may act as translators for pupils and families, if considered appropriate.

Parents/carers are also welcome to involve personal translators (either professionals or friends/family members) in the support of their child. Often personal translators accompany families to annual reviews and parents evening to support the communication between parents and school.

8. Daily support

The Department of Education have both produced comprehensive working documents on how best to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. The documents detail a series of strategies to teach language meaningfully, moving from the early stages of language development through to complex linguistic concepts. The themes throughout both documents are in line with the strategies used in school as part of daily planning and delivery.

Examples of the recommended strategies:

- Use gestures/visuals/objects.

- Modell social conventions.

- Ensuring the pupil knows staff members' names.

- Differentiate lessons to each pupil's language capability.

9. Approval

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by directors.