

<b>Policy</b>	English as an Additional Language
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## English as an Additional Language

### Introduction

A number of 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 pupils in the UK or their families is increasingly diverse. This diversity is viewed positively by all at Oracle 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.

### Our Key Principles:

1. All pupils are entitled to equal access to the curriculum.
2. Forming and maintaining strong links with parents is fundamental to our pupils' learning and development.
3. Learning and using more than one language is an asset and opens up a learning opportunity for our pupils and staff.
4. Promoting development in a pupil's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages

### Potential difficulties when working with pupils with EAL and autism

1. Distinguishing English language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent disordered communication development. Whether or not they have EAL, most students in Oracle School experience some form of communication impairment, consistent with their diagnosis. Accurate assessment of a pupil's receptive and expressive language skills must take into account EAL status and good practice guidelines.

2. Supporting pupils with complex 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. All of our pupils have special education needs 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. Families of children with additional needs may have come across outdated advice regarding stopping use of the home language. All staff at Oracle School must reassure families that current guidance says families should provide the best language model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent.
4. Establishing strong links with families in spite of language barriers. A child with ELA is best supported when families/carers and school work together and the school is constantly striving to maintain, develop and strengthen our links with families/carers. When working with families with EAL, existing language barriers must be addressed in order to optimise the pupil's progress.

## How we will support our EAL families and pupils

### Data Gathering

As part of the entry procedure to Oracle School, from September 2017 parents/guardians/carers will be expected to disclose their child's ethnicity, home language, first language and religion. This will enable the school to support families and the pupil in the best way possible.

### Respecting Diversity

Oracle 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. Oracle School can develop understanding and awareness of their own and other pupils' linguistic and social cultures through a range of events including:

- Cultural theme weeks in school
- Culturally diverse assemblies
- Trips to culturally related places in the community (eg: local temples, synagogues, mosques etc)
- Working closely with parents/ carers of pupils to understand their

perception of special education needs in their culture

- Displaying work done by pupils in theme weeks so learning about different languages and social cultures is constantly showcased in the school
- Responsible to ensure resources used in class activities reflect a range of ethnicity (eg: ensuring the library has a range of books in various languages)

## 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. Some staff are using EAL and may be able to converse with a child/family/carers in a different language if needed. They can act as positive role models for children who may be self-conscious that English is not their first language.

## Translators and translation services

If required Oracle school access the following translation services:

The National Autistic Society Telephone interpretation service: 0808 800 4104.

Prior to admission of pupil with EAL to Oracle School, a library of resources will be developed which will include a range of leaflets in the pupil's language.

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

## Supporting children with special Education Needs and EAL on a daily basis at Oracle School

In terms of supporting children who are developing English as an additional language within the classroom, many of the strategies recommended by advisory bodies are similar to that of good SEN Practice. The Department of Education have 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 Oracle School as part of the daily planning and delivery.

## Examples of the recommended strategies:

*Use gesture/visuals/object.* At Oracle School a range of appropriate visual supports are used to enhance pupils' understanding and learning. Visual

systems are in place throughout the school using both symbols and photos which do not rely on a child's understanding of a specific language.

*Modelling social conventions:* Social skills are focused on as part of a pupil's daily experience at Oracle School. Teachers pro-actively plan for social learning opportunities in their lesson plans and all staff capitalise on naturalistic events to make social learning ongoing and meaningful for the pupils. Social Stories are also created and used with individual pupils or groups of pupils to further develop understanding of social rules.

*Differentiate lessons to each pupil's language capability:* Due to the wide range of cognitive and communicative needs of our pupils, all staff at Oracle School are actively encouraged to differentiate a lesson for all pupils in their class through planning sheets. As experienced practitioners, teachers at Oracle Scholl are specifically skilled at using a range of multisensory learning to enable a pupil to access a lesson through means other than verbal language.

For further strategies please refer to the document strategies for supporting pupils for whom English is an additional Language, "Supporting children learning EAL" (2012) by the Department of Education.