



Approach to EAL learners including those who have SEND.

At Malvern Parish, our vision is for all children to flourish and to use their God-given gifts and talents. We aim to develop pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need in order to flourish as individuals, achieve academically and build firm foundations for the future. We believe that being able to read and write confidently and competently is key to this. Please refer to relevant documents to read how our school approaches reading and writing.

EAL learners

In order to support EAL learners, we need to understand who they are.

The term “EAL” is used to describe a diverse and heterogeneous group of learners who speak English as an Additional Language. 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, 2019).

Factors affecting a learner’s academic achievement

Children who attend Malvern Parish and who are EAL learners are likely to face various factors that may affect their academic achievement – in our school, we hope to be mindful of these challenges and try to overcome these for each EAL learner. The Bell Foundation work to overcome any disadvantages of being an EAL learner through education. They have identified several risk factors affecting a learner’s academic achievements – these are some of the issues we hope to consider as we welcome EAL learners into our school. These factors include the following (more information can be found on The Bell Foundation’s website here:

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/resources/guidance/classroom-guidance/what-is-eal-in-education/>

- **Proficiency in English**

Learners may be at any stage of developing English language proficiency, from New to English, to completely Fluent. Proficiency also provides a clear indication of the need for support.

- **Point of arrival in the English education system**

Learners may have been born and have been through the education system in England, or be more recent arrivals. They may arrive at the start of an academic year or midway through. Learners may have received high level, well-structured learning before their arrival at Malvern Parish or they may have encountered huge disruption in their education, little education and/or trauma in their lives. They may have difficulty in adapting to the British school system for example in how resources are used, teacher expectations or to the style of teaching. Similarly, learners and their families may have had very different experiences of and attitudes towards education.

- **First language**

The English language is closer to some languages, in terms of phonology, graphology and grammatical foundations, and in this sense, may initially impact on the speed of language acquisition.

- **First language proficiency**

Some learners may speak and write several languages while others may have limited literacy in their first language. This can be the same for other family members. If children are proficient in one language, it is likely that they will gain skills in a second language more quickly.

- **Social class and economic status**

The reasons for people moving to the UK are vast. Learners may, therefore, come from a highly privileged background or have suffered discrimination and poverty.

- **National, ethnic and cultural background**

Learners may or may not be British citizens. Young people from the same country of origin as each other may be from very different ethnic or cultural groups within that country. Religion is another area of diversity; learners may have a non-religious belief, or a nominal religion or belief, or a religious faith that is central to their lives.

- **Academic ability**

Learners may have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), such as hearing impairment or dyslexia or they may be Academically More Able (AMA).

- **Support networks**

Some learners have a lot of support from their family and community while others may be isolated.

- **Experience of life in the UK**

Experiences vary a great deal, from very positive to very negative, including experience of racism, hate crime and/or bullying.

Assessment framework

We will use the 'EAL Assessment Framework – Primary' from The Bell Foundation to assess EAL learners' proficiency in listening, speaking, viewing and reading, and writing. This can be used as an initial assessment and to monitor progress over time. There is also a version suitable for EYFS EAL learners.

Learners will emerge in a certain band, depending on their proficiency in 4 areas in listening, speaking, viewing and reading, and writing. These 5 bands, named A to E, begin with learners

who are new to English and progress through early acquisition, developing competence, competent and finish with learners who are fluent in English.

Assessment bands



At Malvern Parish we have EAL learners across the spectrum of these bands. This document mostly focuses on Bands A to C as beyond this, good classroom practice (that supports all children) will enable EAL learners to make good progress.

Ideas for supporting EAL learners in the classroom

The support required differs depending on which band the learner falls within. It should be noted that good classroom practice supports EAL learners (as well as most other learners).

Good classroom practice may include the following:

- Involving the learner in classroom organisation tasks (e.g. handing out resources)
- Speaking clearly, slowing and carefully.
- Repeating commands using key words - cutting out unnecessary language.
- Chunking instructions into stages.
- Use facial expressions, gestures, mime where appropriate for key vocabulary.
- If idiomatic or colloquial language is used, repeat the phrase using standard or simplified English.
- Allow extra thinking time for children when they are asked to answer a question.
- Providing dual-coded resources for key vocabulary e.g. Widgeits.
- Pointing to key words or pictures that are being referred to.
- Ensure that EAL learners have access to reading books at their level.
- Provide a visual timetable.
- Sit EAL learners with supportive learning partners who are willing to involve the EAL learner in both learning conversations and everyday discussions.
- Recast errors verbally (e.g. “she say I go to sleep” → “she said you went to sleep”).

Other ideas for supporting EAL learners in the classroom include the following:

- Allow work to be completed in the first language and provide resources that use both first language and English. E.g. resources could be labelled in both languages or worksheets could provide key vocabulary in both languages.
- Circle time or classroom talk during learning could model required responses.
- Talking with other children about the different languages spoken in class.

- Adults and other learners could learn some words from the EAL learner’s language.
- Providing drama and hands-on activities so EAL learners can participate in learning activities that support their cognitive development.
- Use different styles of questioning and include (and expect) the EAL learner to answer some questions in class (e.g. yes/no questions, closed questions or questions that start with key question words such as what, where, when, why, who or how).
- Accept that there may be a period of non-verbal communication on the part of a newly arrived pupil; they will be observing, listening and learning during this silent period time.
- Use a home-school book to communicate with parents.
- Invite parents into the classroom to read to their child in their first language.

Where to start?

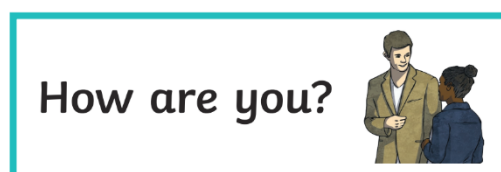
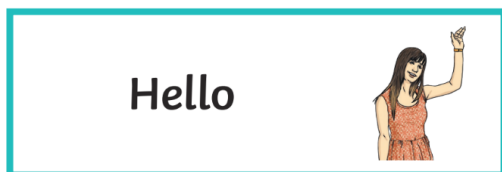
The following sections provide a suggested sequence for supporting EAL learners. Many of these support ideas and strategies will need to run concurrently and may be required long-term.

If children have very little or no English, support may include the following:

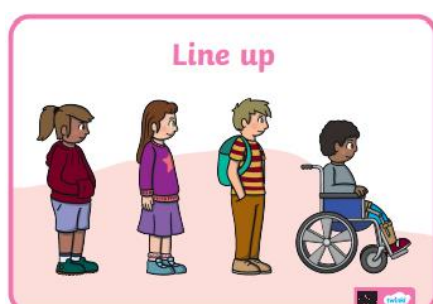
- ‘Emergency’ communication cards – ideally in both languages and always with visuals to support understanding.



- Greetings and simple introductions flashcards – ideally in both languages and always with visuals to support understanding.



- Classroom instructions resources.



Moving on to developing proficiency in reading, writing and understanding English

As children settle in, they will need more structured support with learning English.

- Learning the English alphabet and writing system (left to right).
- Specific ongoing support in learning the alphabet
- Specific ongoing support in building phonological awareness. We will assess and teach this using our school's Early Reading approach (Little Wandle).
- Specific ongoing support in forming both capital and lowercase letters. Regular handwriting practice will be necessary.
- They could create books about themselves – perhaps in both their first language and in English. This may simply be in the form of labels to begin with. This may move on to simple sentences such as 'My name is ___' or 'I am ___ years old' or 'I was born in ___'.

Developing understanding and building vocabulary

- EAL learners should begin by sorting / matching / spotting / sequencing using key vocabulary related to day-to-day activities if children are at the very start of their English journey or related to current classroom learning (e.g. a story in English or a theme in science for example).

Individual word work

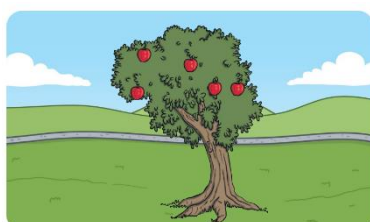
- Learners could begin to develop their vocabulary and written skills by labelling images by choosing, matching or writing labels depending on their level of English.



- Activities with missing words, phrases or sentences should be used to move on to sentence level. A word bank could be used (with images to start with but this could be picture-less as proficiency with English develops).



- Learners could then move on to cutting up text to re-sequence or unscrambling a sentence before writing it in the correct order.

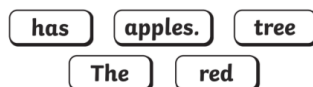
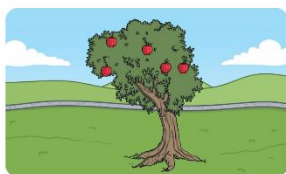


Building words into sentences

As children build their vocabulary, they should use these words to build sentences. Sentences are made up not only of words but the associated grammar and punctuation too. As children begin to build sentences, the expectation should be for them to learn punctuation in the sequence set out by the National Curriculum – starting with the basics such as capital letters and full stops and moving on to question marks, exclamation marks, commas etc.

There are various strategies that can be employed to help with this:

- Learners could continue activities involving cutting up text to re-sequence or unscrambling a sentence before writing it in the correct order. Attention should be given to the capital letter and full stop as well as important words such as determiners, nouns or adjectives.



- Copy and complete – adults model correct sentence structure, syntax and punctuation while the EAL learner copies that model exactly. Visual cues for expectations can be provided and the learner should be encouraged to check their finished work against these. Verbal feedback can be given against these expectations.
- Colourful Semantics – see Colourful Semantics section.

Building sentences into paragraphs

As EAL learners progress, they will be able to take part in whole class teaching more readily. Teacher should adapt resources for them where necessary and make use of the ideas noted at the beginning of this document for supporting EAL learners in the classroom. EAL learners will work towards being fluent in listening, speaking, viewing and reading and in writing.

EAL learners should be given opportunities to write in paragraphs in achievable writing tasks. Postcards or factfiles (about themselves, their home country or a character or an animal or a place) could be good starting points. Other achievable text types could include a diary, a letter, a setting description or character description. Children could retell a known story, they could write a next paragraph or a next chapter. These are likely to make use of adaptive teaching as part of whole class teaching.

Assessing progress

The progress of EAL learners in curriculum subjects will be assessed and recorded using standard school systems. Where appropriate, widely available assessments should be used even if these are out of key stage. These provide opportunities for formative assessment. Summative assessments could be recorded using a Tracker such as that provided by the Bell Foundation (<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/resources/detail/assessment-framework-primary/>).

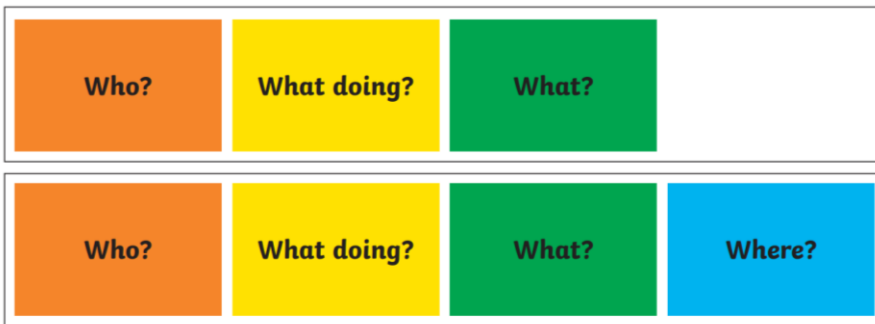
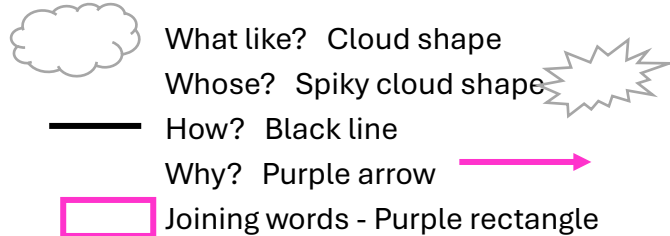
Colourful Semantics

This is a psycholinguistic approach that can be used to build skills in speaking and writing. It is an approach that aims to teach learners how to build and understand sentence structures.

How do Colourful Semantics Work?

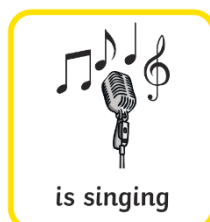
Colourful Semantics teaches children about the different parts of a sentence by giving each one a colour (or sometimes a shape) associated with a question prompt:

Who? Orange
What doing? Yellow
What? Green
Where? Blue
When? Brown
To whom? Pink



When introducing Colourful Semantics to a child, a limited number of these categories or colours should be used initially. Perhaps just **who** and **what doing** for very early learners and then adding **what** or **where** or **when**? Widgets or words can be created and colour coded and then used on a sentence building strip. As children progress, or with older children, colours can be linked with grammatical concepts such as subject, verb, object, adjective, preposition etc.

Different banks of words can be used for everyday conversation or for classroom-based learning in English or geography or science or other curriculum subjects. Children should be introduced to the vocabulary by an adult to check understanding. Sentences can be modelled using the Widget or word cards and then independent sentence building can take place.



References

All resources and website accessed and available 10.12.2024

- **The Bell Foundation** - <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/>

Lots of the information on assessing and supporting EAL children in class came from the Bell Foundation website and resources. Some information was paraphrased. A free account is needed to access resources.

- **Worcestershire Education and Early Years Service** - <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/worcestershire-education-and-early-years-services/inclusion-educational-settings/english-additional-language-eal>

Some of the suggested support strategies to help EAL learners in a primary classroom came from this website. Some ideas and support strategies are freely available on this website.

- **Twinkl** – <https://www.twinkl.co.uk>

Some of the support resources for word and sentence work and the Colourful Semantics images and information came from Twinkl. A paid subscription account is needed to access most resources.

- **Widgits** - <https://widgionline.com/en/home>

Many of the support strategies mentioned here use Widgits. A paid subscription account is needed to access most resources.