

Policy for English as an Additional Language

Rationale

Bilingualism is an accepted part of life in most countries in the world. Research has shown it is not a disadvantage; in fact it can benefit cognitive skills.

Bilingual EAL learners in schools in Milton Keynes come from a variety of language and literacy backgrounds. Some have arrived at school having had a certain amount of exposure to the English language and the local culture: others are newcomers to both. Some have developed literacy skills in their home language; others are pre-literate. Some have comparable schooling to their age equivalent peers; others may have experienced interrupted or no previous education.

The school is committed to making appropriate provision of teaching and resources for bilingual pupils.

Each pupil's needs will be identified. The skills they bring to the school will be recognised. We will ensure equality of access to the curriculum.

Underlying Principles

All bilingual EAL learners are entitled to the full range of pre-school and statutory education services.

All bilingual EAL learners are entitled to equal opportunities of educational success.

Bilingualism/multilingualism is an achievement which is educationally enriching.

Having a home language other than English is not a learning difficulty. Special Educational Needs and the needs of bilingual EAL learners are not identical neither are they mutually exclusive.

Pre Prep Department

Full support will be given to any child in our care for whom English is an additional language.

The Head of Department, in consultation with the child's class teacher and the parents or guardians of the child, will develop an appropriate programme of support for each individual child.

Visual resources are available to help with general language acquisition. Each activity within the classroom will be differentiated so that every pupil is able to access it effectively. Individual resources will be prepared to help the child understand the importance of their home language.

Progress will be continually monitored and parents kept informed.

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EAL Objectives

We aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that all bilingual EAL learners participate in and gain access to mainstream provision.
- To support bilingual EAL learners in their acquisition of English language skills across the curriculum.
- To ensure that bilingual EAL learners attain levels appropriate to their intellectual ability.
- To assess and monitor progress in the acquisition of English as an additional language for all bilingual EAL learners.
- To provide training for subject/class teachers in strategies that will address the needs of bilingual EAL learners.
- To develop resources, including home language materials, that will enhance the linguistic skills and conceptual understanding of bilingual EAL learners.
- To develop home/school/community links.

Guidelines

There are policies in place relating to:

- Multicultural education
- Equal opportunities
- Inclusion
- Special Needs – at both end of the spectrum

All of these policies have a bearing on the education of children having English as an additional language.

Assessment

- The needs of bilingual pupils are assessed and levels of English measured (Hester Stages).
- We do not consider bilingualism to be a learning difficulty
- Pupils will work towards the JET Tests set by AQA.
- The junior tests are at five levels and pupils gain a certificate showing their achievement in Reading, Writing and Listening Skills.
- Bilingual pupils in the Preparatory Department will take the usual school examinations.

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Assessment

- Other assessment should comply with procedures used for all other pupils in the school.
- Care should be taken to ensure that assessment is not culturally biased against pupils from particular ethnic groups or influenced by unconscious assumptions about relative abilities and characteristics of different ethnic groups.

Teaching and Learning

Extra support is provided on a regular basis, in small groups, for those children for whom English is an additional language.

All pupils have curriculum learning needs; bilingual EAL learners also have language learning needs.

Language is best learned in a meaningful context – the mainstream classroom.

Bilingual EAL learners should be encouraged to use their home language in the learning environment.

The richness of linguistic diversity should be celebrated through the curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of other cultures can be enhanced for indigenous pupils by drawing on the experiences of bilingual EAL learners and integrating it into the curriculum.

Plans will identify the language demands of the pupils and provide differentiated learning opportunities matched to bilingual pupil needs. We will develop pupils' English language skills in line with the School Curriculum.

If necessary, we will provide regular extra support for the pupils in small groups. This support should foster a positive attitude to the learning of English, developing knowledge and understanding of spoken and written forms of English; developing the ability to listen and read; developing the ability to communicate effectively through the written and spoken word and to develop knowledge and understanding of the grammar of English and the ability to apply it accurately in the appropriate context.

In general, however, children will be taught English in the mainstream classroom. We recognise that children will benefit from hearing models of correct English in the classroom, but also that the English they hear in other situations, though not necessarily grammatically correct, will help their understanding of the spoken language.

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Teaching and Learning

This support is designed to:

- Foster a positive attitude to the learning of English, developing knowledge and understanding of spoken and written forms of English.
- Develop the ability to listen and read
- Develop the ability to communicate effectively through the written and spoken word.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the grammar of English and the ability to apply it accurately in the appropriate context.

Conclusion

It is evident that the progress of bilingual EAL learners is significantly influenced by school and community ethos and by teacher attitude and expectation. It is therefore important that the school values and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity.