

English as an additional language

Background Information

English language support for speakers of other languages dates back to the early 1970's with the arrival of Vietnamese families into the area.

In the 1980's the setting up of factories by Japanese companies resulted in a large influx of Japanese families with children requiring English language support. At the same time there was also an increase in admissions to schools of pupils from other ethnic minority backgrounds. This development highlighted the need for a more coherent approach to the delivery of English language support. In line with good practice, specialist E.A.L. teams were established.

The 1990's has seen a considerable rise in the number of families from a much wider range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds choosing to settle here.

With the greater freedom of movement in employment within the European Union it is envisaged that there will be a significant increase in the number of ethnic minority families in the country areas whose children will require English language support.

Aims and Objectives of the English as an Additional Language Service

1. To provide an EAL support service for schools

By providing teachers, usually on a peripatetic basis

By providing access to resources for these teachers and schools

By providing details of courses, publications on EAL

2. To take into account the special linguistic needs arising from bilingual pupil's cultural backgrounds and expectations of their school and peer group.

By providing assessments

By recording such assessments and discussing the results and future plans with the school

By positively expanding the pupils self concept and the school's peer group's expectations

3. To enable pupils to reach their full potential in English language so that they have equal access to the breadth of the National Curriculum:

By providing a suitable learning environment

By teaching the English language and showing pupils the relevance of English across the curriculum

By producing teaching materials and resources, where necessary, for E.A.L. and other subject teachers

By establishing working contact with support teachers, outside agencies, e.g. IWO's, School Health Service and all staff working for the education of ethnic minority pupils.

4. To encourage a sympathetic ethos within the schools, and a learning environment generally conducive to pupils reaching their true learning potential:

By providing opportunities for discourse on good practice with teachers and parents

By contributing to the in-service needs of teachers

By being willing to contribute to the production of curriculum policies

By providing guidelines on good practice

Procedures for New Bi – lingual learners

Admissions

Policy and procedure for admissions to schools of pupils requiring English as an additional language (EAL) support

Responsibility for Admission

The LEA is responsible for determining the arrangements for admission of pupils requiring English Support to all County Primary, Secondary, Special and Voluntary Controlled Schools

The Governing Bodies of Aided Schools are expected to consult with the LEA prior to the admission of pupils requiring English as a Additional Language support

Fundamentals of policy

It is the LEA's policy that the EAL pupils should be integrated as fully as possible into mainstream education with opportunities for individual or small group support where necessary.

The Authority operates a policy of open access to all schools. However, in order to maximise the effective use of available resources and to best meet the needs of EAL pupils, the LEA may wish to advise parents about those schools which have additional resources.

Admissions Procedure

Before admitting pupils who may require English language support, schools should refer to their area EAL Co-ordinator in order that appropriate recommendations can be made.

Under the 1996 Education Act, Section 423, parents retain their right to appeal against decisions made by the LEA.

Bi – lingual Learners and the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum is an entitlement curriculum. The Education Reform Act 1988 enshrines the right of all pupils to access a balanced broadly based curriculum.

The key to such access to English medium schools must be proficiency in the English language.

For many school pupils, English is not their mother tongue i.e. English is not the language of their home, their culture or their upbringing. Even if they are born and brought up in the United Kingdom, they may not be exposed to the English language until they enter school, at which time they have to acquire the language and function in it simultaneously. They will be behind their peers in English language development for a period of time. It should, however, be appreciated that bi – lingual children have a rich experience of languages and concepts in their home language.

“No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he (or she) crosses the school threshold and the curriculum should reflect this”

Bullock, 1975

All pupils have the right to attain competence in spoken and written English, otherwise they will be disadvantaged in their study of subjects across the curriculum and in their future working life.

Bi – lingual pupils should follow the same programme of study as their peers but tasks should be differentiated, so that there is extra language support,, extra oral work and plenty of time to listen to and absorb the language in order to enable them to cope with the mainstream curriculum.

Bi – lingual children learning the English language and learning in the English Language are in different context from children with special educational needs and so the work and materials used should be cognitively demanding.

National Curriculum Council Circular 11 – Linguistic Diversity and the National Curriculum, March 1991

This document promotes a supportive approach to bi – lingualism in the context of the National Curriculum and views the fact that many children in English medium schools regularly speak another language as a positive asset.

“Linguistic diversityprovides an opportunity for pupils to gain first hand experience, knowledge and understanding of other cultures and perspectives. It also helps prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society by promoting respect for all forms of language. Variety of language is a rich resource is a rich resource which schools should use as they implement the National

Curriculum”.
DES/NCC, 1998

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Education and Children’s Rights June 1993

English as an Additional Language

“17.1 For the many children in school for whom English is not their first language, access to the education system is dependant on the provision of the teaching of English as a special language...failure to... (make such provision)... represents both a breach of their rights not to be discriminated against (article 2) and their rights to education on the basis of equal opportunity”.

“17.2... Clearly a commitment to “the development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (article 29.1a) would require that children are offered a setting for learning which strives to achieve that optimum potential”.

18 Language Diversity

“18.1 Article 29.1c stresses that education should seek to develop respect for the child's own cultural identity, language and values'. This objective is re-inforced by article 30 and the right of a child to use his or her own language”.

European Directive – E.E.C. Commission 1977

This directive states

“That L2 facilities should be provided to all, including the children of immigrants from outside the EEC”.

Bi – lingual Pupils and Special Educational Needs Legal Framework

“The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children from minority ethnic groups, including children whose first language is not English or Welsh, requires very careful consideration. Lack of competence in English or Welsh must be not equated with learning difficulties. Care should be taken to consider the child within the context of his or her home, language, culture and community; to ensure, if necessary by the use of bilingual support staff, interpreters and translators, that the child and his or her parents fully understand the measures the school is taking; and, so far as possible;, to use assessment tools which are culturally neutral and useful for a range of ethnic groups. Schools should make use of any local sources of advice relevant to the ethnic group concerned”.

Section 156, para 2;11 of the Code of Practice states categorically that:-

“A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she will be taught”.

The stages of the Code of Practice refer to specifically to children with learning difficulties. A referral in relation to a pupil's need to acquire English is a separate category of need, and such pupils should not feature on the school's SEN register, or a stage 3 notification to the LEA.

Special Educational Needs

Code of Practice 1994