

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

'For humans, language, thinking and learning go hand in hand.'

T Lucas, 2011

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Introduction / Mission statement

Sevenoaks Preparatory School (The Prep) is an independent preparatory school on the outskirts of Sevenoaks, Kent with approximately 400 pupils between 2 and 13 years of age. Our families are varied, and represent the local, national and international communities.

The definition of EAL is, according to the Department for Education, as follows:

“A pupil is recorded as having English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English.” (English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language, DfE, 2020).

At The Prep, just over 20% of children are recorded as having EAL according to the definition. This number comprises of 5% of children whose first language is other than English and 16% who are exposed to another language.

The Prep is committed to providing an education to all pupils which acknowledges and is enriched by the diversity of ethnicity, culture and religious backgrounds of all pupils and their families. We believe that the curriculum should aim to reflect this diversity and that successful education is achieved by sharing the experiences and cultural backgrounds of all pupils. It is important to recognise pupils with more than one language in their lives and to encourage them and their families, where possible, to express themselves in these languages. Learning any language is a lifelong process and is greatly enhanced by the opportunity to hear and use each language at the appropriate developmental level. We also recognise that it is important to distinguish between social and academic language, and we are keen to encourage children to become fluent in both.

We aim to support families in maintaining the non-English language at home with their (extended) families, as this serves to preserve the cultural identity of the child and it offers the child the best start to being a global citizen.

Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, is supported by Quality First Teaching in the classroom. Quality First Teaching involves good planning of well-sequenced and manageable lessons coupled with effective pedagogical choices and effective and robust assessment for learning. Lessons are clearly structured and learning objectives are made clear to the pupils. Teachers employ interactive and multi-sensory teaching methods and ensure that time is spent in collaborative group work. Teachers promote active and independent learning enabling pupils to think for themselves and to begin to have some level of autonomy within their learning. They differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with EAL, Higher Learning Potential (HLP) and SEND. This policy is a whole school policy and applies to all children in Sevenoaks Prep School, including the Pre-Prep and EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).

Planning, monitoring and evaluation of pupils with EAL

All children with EAL are identified on entry and their language development is closely monitored. An annual EAL list is produced and shared with all teaching staff. Parents are also given the opportunity to regularly update the language information regarding their child(ren).

Pupils at The Prep are assessed regularly using NGRT (reading), NGST (spelling), PTE (Progress in English) and CAT (Cognitive Abilities) tests. The data is analysed by the teachers who look specifically at the achievement and progress of learners with EAL. Further meetings between the Deputy Head, EAL Coordinator and the English department take place to discuss progress and inform future learning/teaching targets as part of Quality First teaching.

Pupils will learn alongside their peers in the classroom, thus providing an integrated language, content and cultural environment, aimed at motivating and meeting the distinctive needs of EAL learners. It may still also be necessary to withdraw pupils from the mainstream class to work on specific targets that will be linked to class or subject work.

The EAL coordinator is responsible for supporting and monitoring curriculum planning and Schemes of Work regarding provision for EAL pupils.

EAL teaching and learning

The Prep EYFS Department recognises that in the Early Years conceptual and linguistic knowledge is acquired simultaneously and staff modify their interactions to encourage language development, both in English and in their home language.

Children of all ages, including EYFS, are encouraged to learn to read and write and speak in their own languages as well as mastering English. The timing of learning to read and write in English will need to take into account their learning journey in their home language.

Expectations of EAL pupils are high and The Prep fosters an understanding and philosophy that children with EAL have a strength in their lives which they are encouraged to build on, rather than a difficulty. All teachers involved with EAL pupils' learning are involved in the planning, monitoring and reviewing of EAL pupils' needs and achievements. The EAL coordinator has responsibility for coordinating the needs of the pupils and is responsible for evaluating the school policy for pupils with English as an Additional Language.

It is recognised that each pupil with EAL will have their own specific profile of language needs which is determined through observation, informal assessment and formal assessment (Renfrew Action Picture Test for pupils up to 7 years), and supported with targeted intervention where necessary. Examples of these **additional** interventions are:

- Phonics for younger pupils or pupils (nearly) new to English
- Comprehension/writing support through exposure to challenging language and writing structure/key phrases/graphic organisers for older pupils.

EAL, Higher Learning Potential (HLP) and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

At The Prep, a child is not regarded as having a learning difficulty simply because the language or form of language of the home/extended community is different from the language in which she or he is taught at school. The EAL coordinator is available to offer assessment or advice, should there be concerns about a child's language development, and support by the EAL coordinator and/or the Learning Support department are available at any stage of a child's time at The Prep.

Where required, the EAL coordinator and the HLP coordinator will liaise and offer guidance for EAL pupils who are also HLP.

The EAL coordinator fosters a whole-school approach of high expectations of children with EAL.

Assessment and record keeping

At all levels/ages of the pupils' time at The Prep, EAL pupils are identified as such, as per the DfE guidance. First language assessment rarely takes place formally. Information on this is gathered from parents. English language proficiency information is collected through teacher assessment as well as formal testing.

Parents/carers and the wider community

The Prep reaches out to parents of EAL children and seeks to forge strong bonds with EAL families in order to encourage and reassure parents that The Prep supports their home language(s). Community events may be organised with specific focus on multilingual families, e.g. themed days (A Taste of Languages at The Prep, International Day), outreach to EAL parents (Multilingual Families' Coffee Morning) and other activities where a multilingual response is encouraged. Additionally, the EAL coordinator is available for conversation with and guidance/encouragement to multilingual parents.

Staff development

The EAL coordinator, supported by the SMT, has the responsibility to offer regular guidance/training to staff, through Twilight/Staff Briefing meetings and feedback from training/webinars/conferences attended.

Other Policies

Other policies that should be read in conjunction with the SEND Policy:

Admissions; Anti-bullying; Assessment; Curriculum; Monitoring & Tracking; MAL; Complaints Procedure; Behaviour; Accessibility; Equal Opportunities; Data Protection; Safeguarding policy, Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy.